BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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Founded 1950

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 1996 are:-

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Mainland Europe, including Eire	£9 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	11.50 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in April, August and December of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material Copyright ICC 1995.

EDITORIAL

The death of Gary Crosby in August at the relatively young age of 62 was a real shock to us all and it almost seems now as though there was a jinx on Bing's first family. Only Philip still remains. We send our condolences to members of the Crosby family. Our obituaries section covers the loss of Gary in greater depth and, sadly, the deaths of Phil Harris and Maxene Andrews plus radio presenters Alan Dell and Trevor Littlechild.

In the last edition, I explained the late arrival of BING 109 and it now falls to me to discuss the reasons for the August issue not turning up until well into September. All of the material for the magazine is typed out by me and my family and put on to a floppy disc which the printer can read into his equipment. The printer received the disc and the related photographs on July 4 and it should only be a relatively short job to call up the text and set out the pages with room for the photographs. However the printer gives us a very competitive price indeed because we are happy for him to fit in the work when convenient. In this way, he can give priority to the more lucrative jobs that come his way. The first proof of the magazine did not come back to me until the beginning of August and I quickly proof read it and returned it to the printer. I decided to forego the luxury of a second proof reading because of the lateness. The printer actioned the magazine quickly and the printed sheets were passed to John Joyce and Son by August 7th. for binding and distribution. Again John charges only a nominal fee for his work and he does have a business to run. He simply cannot drop everything for us and unfortunately therefore the magazine was 3 weeks late in reaching you and we can only apologise for this.

Many members contacted either Michael Crampton and myself to enquire what had happened and both BT and the Post Office must experience a surge in income at such times. Most enquiries were polite and concerned and there were only two which queried the abilities of the (volunteer and unpaid) management team. The management team can solve the problems of the late arrival at a stroke but it would mean that subscriptions would have to go up substantially. We discussed the situation at the Leeds meeting and it was the wish of the meeting that the present arrangements be left in place for the time being. We are hoping that this issue will be out before Christmas and I am preparing it appropriately. If you are reading this in January, there will be no-one more frustrated than me as many of the articles will no longer be relevant.

We have some nice seasonal stories for you and I know that you will all be pleased to see Leslie Gaylor back in our pages. Our research into Bing's early career through the pages of Variety magazine is yielding dividends as you will read and you may like to know that we hope to publish a fairly detailed diary of Bing's life in the next year or so. Fred Reynolds did prepare something similar many years ago which he showed Bing in 1961 and Bing thought it fairly accurate. Roger Osterholm's chronology in his recent book was the inspiration for me to undertake an expanded version and so far the diary runs to 38 x A4 pages (two columns each). It is fascinating to see how busy Bing was during his life and how often he was hospitalised, particularly in the last 20 years of his life. We still have a lot of research to do and I feel sure that the completed document (which we hope to present in glossy magazine format with plenty of photographs) will be of real interest to members. Another subject we shall be covering next year will be Bing's appearances on the Internet. Whatever next? I just can't keep up with technology!

Many of you have been enquiring about Volume 4 of Fred Reynolds 'Crosby Collection' series and you will be pleased to see the separate insert enclosed with the magazine which confirms that it is now available as is a coloured Crosby calendar for 1996. They would make nice Christmas presents if your relatives are struggling for inspiration.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Warm and festive greetings to all members as we your management team bring down the curtain at the end of our sixth year with this issue of BING 111. We have been encouraged throughout the year by your kind remarks about the content and quality of material in the magazine and we will endeavour to bring you fresh and stimulating articles during 1996.

Sunday, October 1st. at Leeds proved to be another wonderful anniversary occasion as you will read in Ron Bosley's separate article. Without wishing to trespass on Ron's territory I would just like to thank once again Jim Reilly, Marq and Marilee Stankowski, Arnold Pope, Ken Crossland, Barry Whittingham, Don and Peter Haizelden, Ken Barnes / Gord Atkinson and all who contributed to raising the magnificent sum of £235 for club funds.

NEW MEMBERS

New members are continuing to find us via details on CDs or by personal recommendation and we are delighted to welcome newcomers from Australia, Germany, England and North America. It is pleasing too that teenagers are finding that they cannot resist the magic of Bing's appeal and here I would like to extend a special welcome to Lachlan McLean.

AUSTRALIA
Lachlan McLean (NSW)
GERMANY
Hendrik Tiedemann (Solingen)
ENGLAND
Mrs. A. Kearne, Mr. H. Hill, Tony Holmes (all of London). Dennis Faulkner (Leeds), Mr. D. Dent (Holmes Chapel).
NORTH AMERICA
James Crowley (Ill.), John Freiberger (Cal), Larry Gunn (Cal), Joseph Nigra (Neb.), Harold Sunners (NJ), David Venerose (Ohio) and Scott Galley (Toronto, Canada).

DONATIONS

The magnificent sum gifted at Leeds must take pride of place but I would also like to thank Wig Wiggins, George/Mary Harwood, Ralph Harding, Lionel Pairpoint, Malcolm Macfarlane and Maggie Ryan for their generous donations via their fund raising activities.

Additional contributions were also made by our North American friends James Johnson, Kenneth MacGregor, Nicholas Nardella, Sheldon O'Connell, Donald Roegele, Raymond Ruth and John Sarro.

Thank you all for your beneficence.

BACK ISSUES

To date we have raised £114.50 towards club funds from the sale of back issues and please see the advert in Trading Post for further details.

DEATHS

Sadly we must inform you that John Ford of Billericay and Bill White of Essex have recently died. Both members derived much enjoyment from their membership of the ICC and their regular and warm correspondence will be missed. We extend our sympathy to their families.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1996

Members will be pleased to learn that, chiefly as a result of generous donations, we do not have to raise subscriptions for 1996. We hope that this good news will prompt all to renew immediately they receive their December issue. **Please, please renew promptly as late renewals cause your Secretary a great deal of extra work.**

As the year draws to a close, I wonder how many members will be tempted by the new medium of Laserdiscs on which Bing is seen and heard in quality not experienced before. Your secretary has been drawn to the discs but as yet he has no player to spin them on! I will let you know if I fall to the temptation of buying a player.

Until April, may I thank all members for your loyal and generous support.

Michael Crampton

Christmas Gift

Bing's links with Christmas are greater than any other artist but we sometimes forget that it didn't start with 'White Christmas' but in fact it went back to 'Silent Night' in 1934. The details of how this involvement started are set out in the following article which first appeared in the pages of Photoplay magazine under the above title in the late 1940s.

After five years at the Mission in Hanyang, China, Father Ranaghan was back in the United States to raise funds for the work the St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society was doing in China, Korea, Burma and the Philippines. It was a heartbreaking struggle but they were winning over overwhelming odds.... A wound healed at the dispensary, food given to a starving family, dark eyes brightened over the story of the Christ Child born in the manger in Bethlehem. They asked for that story now, "Yeh-su Shengthan," they said, meaning Jesus's Holy Birth.. The priest smiled to himself thinking of their bubbly greetings on Christmas Day. . . . "Gung-shi. . . Gung-shi" - meaning "Isn't it wonderful, it's a great day, a Merry Christmas to you!"

As he drove along Sunset Boulevard that warm sunny December afternoon, the bespectacled, cherub-faced Irish priest determined again that the good work must go on and again asked himself how he could better make this country see the distress that existed there. Somehow he must find his way to our hearts. The air was heavy with orange blossoms, Christmas poinsettias spread scarlet splendor as far as the eye could see. Hanyang and his beloved mission, 400 miles up the Yangtze River . . .all the ignorance, destitution and famine - and the Japanese massing at the border - seemed very far away. As he stopped the jalopy in front of the Paramount Studios where Bing Crosby had his offices then, the little priest peered hopefully through his spectacles at the confusing maze of buildings and the hangar-like humps of studio sound stages. In his worn, black bag, he carried a film that had been made in China with an old-fashioned hand-cranked camera. It showed the mission, the dispensary and the orphanage. It showed natives working in the rice fields. And it showed famine, floods and poverty. It was his hope that this film shown at parishes throughout the States would raise the funds needed for St. Columban's work to go on. He was sorry the film was so old and worn. It needed to be re-edited and brought up to date. Maybe Bing Crosby would help. Some priests he was visiting in Los Angeles had suggested his name. But inside the studio the missionary looked at the chattering extras in their colourful costumes, at all the movie make-believe and again thought, "How can I bring Hanyang here?" He passed the wardrobe building and entered the Crosby office next door.

Bing and his brother Larry were both in. The little priest rushed eagerly into his story of the St. Columban Mission, watched tense and hopeful as the old reel of film was run off on a studio projection machine. Bing watched too, his casual blue eyes as always, giving no hint of his feelings. "If only," Father Ranaghan began timidly when the film had run its length, "I could have a new more up-to-date negative. Maybe you know someone who might possibly be interested. . ."

"Well, Father, we should be able to knock that out for you here," said Bing. "And I think we should put a patter of some kind with it so folks will know what it's all about."

Larry, also deeply interested in the missionary's tale, added, "Why not put the dialogue on a sound track."

'If we make a sound track for it," Bing said, "might as well throw in a musical background, too."

Father Ranaghan hadn't even hoped for this. Emboldened, turning to Bing, he asked, "And would you, as part of the background, perhaps sing 'Silent Night'?" Bing had always believed that sacred songs were, as he put it, "A little out of my league." But reasoning that this track would only be played in the parishes, he agreed. The new print was made at Paramount Studios, complete with commentary and musical background. The priest packed his jalopy happily and headed cross-country to raise funds.

It was Spring before he came to Hollywood again. The hills beyond Paramount were green. Promise of new life and hope bloomed anew. "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful," he had asked. And they had answered. He called on Crosby to give him the good news.

"How much?" Bing asked, getting as usual to the important point. The good father named a sum far in excess of any collected before. Bing shook his head. "Not enough rice," he said. "Not nearly enough rice. Tell you what, Father, we might take some records off the sound track so you'll have something to sell when you pass the hat."

He had a number of recordings of 'Silent Night,' 'Adeste Fideles,' 'Stabat Mater' and the 'St. Columban's Marching Song' taken off the track and gave them to the missionary who jubilantly headed out again with his cargo for the cause. It was a year, this time, before Father Ranaghan returned to Hollywood. Enthusiastic over what he had netted that trip, he again sought Bing promptly. And again.

Bing sings 'Silent Night' in 'Going My Way'

"How much?" asked Bing. The figure named, although impressive to the priest couldn't be compared with the money possible to raise through a commercial outlet. "Not enough," Bing said again. And anyone who knew him well could have told by his preoccupied manner that he had a plan. He had decided to record 'Silent Night' and 'Adeste Fideles' for Decca Records with the understanding that his share of the royalties go to the missionary's fund.

Bing had always been one of the many who are sentimental about 'Silent Night.' Just hearing it took him back to the days when he was a little groaner back in Spokane, brought memories of his Christmas loot, the new skates that he broke in on the lake up by the Jesuit Monastery. Of his mother's plum pudding, stuffed turkey and hot raisin bread. Of a balcony seat at the Orpheum Theatre on Christmas afternoon, walking the four miles each way from home to home so he could spend the car fare at the confectionery after the show. He had sung 'Silent Night' on school programs, in church and at neighborhood parties. And he had sung it at the Christmas clambakes at home, with his sister Catherine on the ivories, his dad accompanying on the mandolin or guitar, and the other Crosbys giving out with holiday harmony for which none of the neighbors had asked Santa Claus. He loved to sing 'Silent Night' actually. But where, he had always asked himself did a crooner get off singing Christmas carols on records or on the radio? He'd better stick to the blue of the night and gold of the day and leave religious songs for fellows with a trained "up-town voice." But now, interested in the missionary's work, he talked himself into recording it. Folks were pretty charitable around Christmas, maybe he'd get away with it. If the Columbans could brave what they did in Korea and China, he could risk a few tomatoes singing 'Silent Night.'

The Irish priest was very happy. He set out with a singing heart to make another round of the parishes and add further to the fund. That was the last time Bing saw Father Ranaghan. He was killed in an automobile accident at Council Bluffs, Iowa. With his death and the Japanese invasion of China, which made communication almost impossible, Bing lost contact with the group of St. Columban's missionaries in Hanyang. Meanwhile, the royalties on every recording of 'Adeste Fideles' and 'Silent Night' were coming in.

"Why not just spread it around among all recognised charitable organisations," suggested Bing to Larry. "A good idea," Larry agreed. And arranged for the royalties to go into a trustee account to be "spread around" among church groups of all denominations everywhere. That was eleven years ago. Today 'Silent Night' is the largest selling record in the world. It spreads pretty thin because of the

impossible number of requests for help the Crosby office receives. Long before Christmas comes around again the fund is depleted. There's only enough for a token contribution at any time, an expression of Bing's faith in the good work being done by the various groups to help humanity. . . . It goes to Innsbruck, Austria, to help provide a cup of milk a day for 3000 school children during the cold winter months. A few rupees go to a convent in India to encourage Sisters who are rescuing Indian children abandoned in filthy market-places. Some guilders go to war-torn Holland. A token contribution goes to Franciscan Fathers for packages of food for Poland. There are the missionaries who are caring for a group of lepers in a mud hut in South Africa. To a small group of Methodists here trying to buy an oil heater for their country church. There's that mission in Kwangtung, China, for the relief of the starving children found scrounging around in garbage pails. That hospital for poor colored children in Alabama. The Jewish Children's Hospital for under-privileged children, in Denver. And to help repair the roof of a Baptist church in Arkansas.

Today, thanks to the energetic dreams of a little Irish priest none are too far away to feel the encouragement of 'Silent Night,' Crosby's Christmas gift to the world. It reaches all races and religions and, at long last through Father Joseph P. Mullen, a missionary back from China, it has again reached the St. Columbans, who during the war years sheltered starving natives from the enemy, guided our troops through the jungles of Burma and rescued the Doolittle fliers and kept them in their mission at Nanchang. Just hearing the records is a gift for the rest of us. For when Bing invites "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," our hearts lift and when he sings 'Silent Night' we feel reassured that all is calm, all is bright. And we determine anew to hold on to peace on Earth and good will to all men.

THE END

(Editor: Makes you think doesn't it? Interesting to read just how big the recording of 'Silent Night' was in the late 1940s before it was eclipsed by 'White Christmas.')

LETTER FROM LESLIE

Yes, Leslie's back after a short break from our pages and how nice to hear from him again.

Hello, members, a warm greeting to you all and can I say at this point, how much I enjoyed the last issue of BING. May I thank all those who contributed to make it a fine success once more. We are fortunate to have such talented people in our midst and my gratitude among many goes out to them for their wonderful efforts.

Like so many others, I was saddened to learn of the passing of the celebrated broadcaster on BBC Radio 2, namely Alan Dell. I had a nice relationship with Alan and I was pleased when from time to time he used Bing recordings which I and Ernest Sutkowski had supplied to him British members always looked forward to his ever popular 'Sounds Easy' programme on Sunday afternoons and a Bing recording was regularly featured and thankfully still is in the 'Crosby Corner'. Our sympathies go out to his family. Judging by my mail, the membership are very pleased with the way that David Jacobs has taken over Alan's 'Sounds Easy' programme and I have passed these complimentary comments on to David. Incidentally, the 'Crosby Corner' section was missing from David's programme on September 24th. I wrote to David about this and he was most concerned about it. It seems that he had to record the programme in advance as he was going to the USA and subsequently the programme was edited and we lost the Bing spot.

The sad death of Trevor Littlechild is mentioned elsewhere in BING and another very knowledgeable radio presenter whose valuable services we have lost is Gerry Didymus. Thankfully Gerry is still with us in person but after 20 years on BBC Radio Solent (broadcast from Southampton), he has decided to take a rest. With his wife unwell, one can understand his decision. Both Trevor and Gerry regularly featured Bing and we shall miss them both.

A query I've had on more than one occasion refers to the 7 inch 33 and a third r.p.m. disc of 'Anthem of the Clams' as sung by Bing and the 'Lorelei of Goose Bay'. Probably recorded in the early 1960s, it was linked to Bing's regular fishing friends who, collectively with Bing, were called the Clams. It is a one sided record, yellowish in colour and I'm afraid that I do not have any spare copies. The record doesn't have a number. It was re-issued on the Broadway Intermission LP 'Crosbyana Vol. 6' in the 1980s for those who are anxious to hear it.

The producers of the compact discs 'Step To The Rear' and 'Take a Longer Look' deserve a pat on the back for these very welcome issues. It has been just fine hearing the frequent radio plays of some of the

recordings and with due thanks to Ernest Sutkowski for supplying the discs to Stan White and myself for distribution to our radio contacts.

Last Spring, I had a telephone call from a fellow living in Southampton just across the water from the Isle of Wight and he conveyed to me that he was producing a home made video taping of his native Scotland and that he was very desirous of having Bing's recording of 'The Lamplighter's Serenade' featured in the film. Somebody put him on to me as one who might be able to help and this I was able to do. He was highly delighted with the sound quality of what I put on cassette for him and I completed matters to give him coverage by providing the record number, the song publishers and the tunesmiths. "I will reward you with a copy of the video on completion" he said, so time will tell.

I have been in touch with Chris Griffin, the Director of Strategic Marketing for MCA Records in London and he has promised to investigate the possibility of issuing further Bing CDs. Also, I have been in contact with Michael Daly, M.D. of the Glass-Gramophone Record Company which has a label called 'Past-Perfect.' He states that his company may well issue a Bing CD and he has promised to contact me again regarding some suggested titles. The Past-Perfect releases so far have been first rate transfer jobs and let's hope that they do undertake a Crosby issue. Incidentally, Mr. Daly mentioned that it was a highlight in his father's career to have worked with Bing and this occurred when his father was the producer of the 'Feels Good, Feels Right' sessions with prominent Bing Decca man Geoff Milne as executive producer.

A little matter that may be of interest to the membership is that somewhere in my collection of Bing Crosby data is a reference to the Bing - Louis Armstrong recording of 'Gone Fishin' and as you all know their duet of this song went out on the Chesterfield radio broadcast of 25th. April, 1951. The Decca people in the USA correctly anticipated that once the song was aired there would be much interest from the general public and they decided to issue a commercial recording of it. However it was realised that Decca would not be able to get Bing and Louis together for another 20 days and it was therefore agreed that a version for commercial release would be recorded at the radio studio whilst both the performers were present. The commercial issue was not the one broadcast over the air.

Finally, another matter that I have often been asked about concerns the 'Bing Sings Shell' jingle which went out on British TV in 1962. When I personally saw this jingle on TV, I wrote to the Shell Petrol people and told them of my admiration for Bing Crosby. Not long afterwards, I received by post a large stiffened envelope which contained a 10 x 8 photograph as shown on TV and this featured a car driving through London and in large letters 'Bing Sings Shell'. Also I received a song sheet of the jingle. A second package from Shell contained three small red three inch tape boxes. The first had Bing singing the 60 seconds jingle, the second tape featured the same Bing recording with the voice of British entertainer Jack Hulbert added (he says "Good heavens, I know that voice") and the third box contained a tape of Michael Holliday singing the same jingle. Bing's recording was made at the CTS Studios in London on November 8th., 1961 and is called 'Touring'. I understand it was done in 20 minutes.

Jack Hulbert's voice was added on November 14th. and the Michael Holliday recording was made at the CTS Studios on October 25, 1961 and is called 'London Touring'. Bing and Michael both autographed the white data labels on the front of the tape boxes for me. A further gesture by the Shell people was that very kindly they had a video tape specially made for me of the advert as seen on television. Bing sings the jingle four times on the video and Michael Holliday sings it on three showings. The video is a very treasured item of Crosby memorabilia for me and one is able to compare quite readily the singing voices of Bing and Michael Holliday.

I would like to sign off by wishing a very Merry Christmas to all members and their families and I hope that 1996 will be a happy year for you all.

Leslie Gaylor

BING IN THE USA

Wig Wiggins reports on some exciting developments across the water.

BING IS BACK ON TELEVISION IN THE USA!

Bing is on television again, in 1995? You'd better believe it!

One evening in July my telephone rang, and it was my good friend and fellow ICC member, Aldo Silengo, of the Connecticut Bing Crosby Club asking for information about "your cable television station in Virginia" that reportedly was planning to show some of Bing's old programs on its network. Aldo said he had heard this news from his son, who lives way down South in Tennessee and subscribes to a satellite service there, but neither he nor his son could come up with any specifics. So would I please try to find out what was going on? You bet I would!

Nostalgia Television

The next day, I was able to confirm that a satellite cable company called Nostalgia Television does, indeed, have a technical facility in Northern Virginia, just a few miles from my home, and that its headquarters is located in downtown Washington, D.C., just across the Potomac River. I also learned that Nostalgia Television is a growing, nation-wide service, with some ten million subscribers through 600 local cable companies, and that it carries a full schedule of comedies and drama from the "golden age of television in the 1950's" and movies from the 1930's and 1940's, as well as musical and variety programs from the same era. Unfortunately, Nostalgia Television's programs are not available in my own part of Virginia, because our local cable system does not subscribe to their service. Nevertheless, Nostalgia's director of programming and production, Mark Ringwald, has very kindly, and most patiently, provided me with the necessary information for this article, the substance of which I already have shared with Aldo Silengo and his son, and with all our fellow ICC members throughout the United States and Canada. We all would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark for his co-operation.

Bing's ABC Specials

Mark Ringwald informed me that Nostalgia Television was planning to rebroadcast a series of hour-long television variety specials that Bing had made for the ABC network between 1958 and 1964, beginning in August 1995 and extending through April, 1996. These were all from the 'black-and-white' days of television, most of which had been sponsored originally by Oldsmobile, a division of General Motors. None of them have been seen on American television in over 30 years! Each of Bing's specials would be shown on three different Sunday evenings, and once on a Saturday evening, as part of a three-hour program called the 'Big Beat Broadcast', which features big band and musical variety shows from the 1950s and 1960s. Nostalgia Television had originally hoped to obtain a total of eleven different programs featuring Bing for rebroadcast, but in the end the ABC network in New York was able to make only seven shows available to Nostalgia. The others "could not be located in the ABC archives".

The first of Bing's programs was shown by Nostalgia in August 1995. It included Jo Stafford, James Garner and Dennis and Philip Crosby as guests, and had originally been telecast by ABC in March 1959. The second program, which was rebroadcast by Nostalgia in September was Bing's special from February 1960 with Perry Como and three of the Crosby Brothers (Dennis, Philip and Lindsay) as guests. And in October, Nostalgia ran Bing's show from September 1959 with Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee and Louis Armstrong as guests.

Schedule of Future Programs

In November, Nostalgia will be rebroadcasting a variety special that Bing taped in London with comedians Terry-Thomas and Dave King and singers Shirley Bassey and Marion Ryan as guests, which was originally shown on ABC in December 1961. This will be followed in December by "ABC's first color TV spectacular" starring Bing, Mary Martin and Andre Previn in a holiday special that was first broadcast on Christmas Eve in 1962. January 1996 will bring a repeat of Bing's Oldsmobile show from October 1960 that starred Rosemary Clooney, Johnny Mercer, Carol Lawrence and the three Crosby Brothers (Dennis, Philip and Lindsay again) as guests. And in February, the last of Bing's seven programs will feature Bob Hope, Edie Adams, the Smothers Brothers and Gary Crosby in a show from May 1962. I also learned from Mark Ringwald that each of Bing's seven programs will be re-run one additional time apiece by Nostalgia Television during March and April 1996. So those ICC members who have not been able to see Bing's shows before then - or succeeded in convincing their local cable television system to add Nostalgia to their service -

will have one final opportunity to do so before these historic tapes disappear back into the ABC vaults, perhaps for evermore!

Pluses and Minuses

This unique, and totally unexpected opportunity for many ICC members in the United States to see (perhaps for the first time) these early television programs that were first broadcast long before the VCR era, will be a tremendous boon for the video collections of Crosby fans everywhere. Inevitably, off-the-air copies of these seven programs will find their way into Crosby collections around the globe, which is great news for all of us. In addition, Bing doubtless will add many new viewers to his legion of fans (beyond the members of the Crosby-collecting fraternity) through Nostalgia's broadcasts, some eighteen years after his death. In fact, Nostalgia already is receiving favourable "cards and letters" (and telephone calls) from its viewers about Bing's reappearance on their television screens after so many years.

Can we hope for more of Bing in the future on Nostalgia? I have suggested to Mark Ringwald that they look into the possibility of re-running Bing's 1964-65 ABC sitcom during their daytime programming, and perhaps adding ABC's "Hollywood Palace" series to their variety schedule. He replied that the main problem would be whether or not Nostalgia could obtain rebroadcast rights for such programs from ABC, or from whichever corporate octopus owns them in this day and age. Interested yes; but not too likely a possibility. But we can always hope!

Many ICC members have asked if they might purchase video copies of Bing's seven specials directly from Nostalgia Television. Unfortunately, Nostalgia only contracted for rebroadcast rights, not video sales rights, so the answer to this question, unfortunately, is "no".

A limited, but regrettable complaint has been brought to my attention by ICC member Greg Van Beek of Wisconsin. Because the number and length of television advertisements were not as overriding (nor as obnoxious) in the 1950's and 1960's as they are in the 1990's, Nostalgia Television has been forced to edit Bing's programs somewhat to make sufficient space for their present-day advertisers. Approximately five minutes is being lost from each program, usually equivalent to one song or dance number, sometimes (but not always) one featuring Bing. So even while enjoying Bing's talents again on television after so many years, we are still missing out on a small portion of each program. Too bad, but we still have a great deal to thank Nostalgia Television for, to say the least.

Your author is one of the Crosby collectors and ICC members who is enjoying seeing these programs for the first time. When they were originally telecast, I was wandering the world as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State while assigned to the American embassies in Djakarta, Indonesia and Rome, Italy. It wasn't until my family and I were transferred back to Washington, D.C. in the late 1960's, that I finally had an opportunity to see Bing on television at all. So my personal reactions to these programs, a third of a century after they were produced, may well be somewhat different from those of other readers of BING, who doubtless remember them well from 'Once Upon A Long Ago'. Accordingly, I intend to submit my carefully considered, but generally unvarnished, critical reviews of each of the seven programs to our esteemed editor, Malcolm Macfarlane, in time for his April 1996 issue. Whether he deigns to print my further musings on the subject remains to be seen, so my fellow ICCers will just have to 'stay tuned for the next episode' to find out!

Kathryn Crosby in 'State Fair'

Finally, a new production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical 'State Fair' is on tour en route for Broadway staring John Davidson, Donna McKecknie, Andrea McArdle and Kathryn Crosby herself. It drew good reviews whilst in the Washington, D.C. area but sadly the comments on Kathryn were rather negative.

"The weak links in this 'Fair' are its Ma and Pa, the anaemic Kathryn Crosby and the scenery chomping John Davidson. Crosby, known primarily as Mrs. Bing Crosby (remember those treacly Minute Maid commercials featuring the entire Crosby clan?) is an attractive but unbelievably stiff performer with a very weak singing voice."

Let's hope Kathryn is able to tighten up her performance before she gets to Broadway.

Wig Wiggins
October 25, 1995

Surely Not The Mills Brothers

Charlie Chapman from Australia tells about a memorable concert.

Sunday afternoon in the South Western suburbs of Sydney and I am warmed not only by the late Autumn sunshine but by the knowledge that I am on my way to Riverwood Legion Club to be entertained by the Mills Brothers in concert. It is indeed exciting to realise that the Mills Brothers are touring Australia. It is phenomenal to relate that this is 1995, Sunday 20 August.

The Mills Brothers have a fond place in the hearts of virtually all Bing enthusiasts. Of all artists associated with Bing over his 50 plus year career, only the Mills Brothers can claim an ongoing professional association with him from almost beginning to end. Of course we are all familiar with those outstanding duets of the 1930s; 'Dinah', 'My Honey's Lovin' Arms' and 'Shine', but the teaming also extended to radio, film, TV and stage. Their only film collaboration was 'The Big Broadcast' but the brothers guested on Bing's radio programmes through the 1930s, 40s and 50s. (Unbelievably, 'Nagasaki', a duet from the 1934 Woodbury Soap Show, turned up on John Newton's 'Personality on Parade' series of LPs several years back.) They featured together in various television specials including Bing's 50th. Anniversary Pasadena concert of March 1977 where they nostalgically revived 'Dinah' and Bing was a special guest performing on stage with the boys in 1976 celebrating their 50 years in show business. To now be on the brink of perhaps meeting as well as being entertained by this living link to Crosbyana had me nervous with anticipation.

The 'Mills Brothers' 1995 Australian tour members, I knew, were to consist of only Donald and his son, John. John had assumed the position in the line-up left vacant on the death of Harry several years ago. The Australian tour had come close to cancellation when Herbert, who was originally scheduled to be part of the tour, was forced to pull out when it was apparent that an ongoing back problem would not allow him to travel. So 'The Mills Brothers' was in reality only one brother featured in duo with his son.

To be honest with myself, I was somewhat apprehensive of just what the afternoon would present. I needn't have had any misgivings. The show was tremendous. Backed by a very polished local trio of drums, bass and guitar, Donald and John began their performance in top gear with 'Opus One' and followed with a selection of favourite songs associated with the Mills Brothers from the 30s, 40s and 50s such as 'Tiger Rag', 'Till Then', 'Up a Lazy River', 'Yellow Bird', and 'Cab Driver'. Although perhaps not as agile on his feet as he once was, Donald's voice is just as powerfully resonate as in the original 78 r.p.m. recordings of those songs. John is highly listenable and the pair blend exceedingly well: a truly marvellous act. It would be little exaggeration to say that with your eyes closed you could swear that you were in another place at another time with just 'The Mills Brothers - Four Boys and a Guitar'. Donald, Herbert, Harry and John.

The concert was a total joy from beginning to end, but a further highlight was in store. After the show and a quick change of clothes, Donald and John made themselves available to sign autographs. Donald's speaking voice is music in itself and it felt like part of the performance just hearing him speak. He struck me as a delightful personality and generous man, readily obliging with my request to be photographed with him and his son. John organised me to stand between them, placing his hand on my shoulder. What a moment that was! (My wife, Kath, was anxious that in her excitement she had used the camera correctly, but as you can see she did me proud as usual.)

I presented John with the JSP chronological series of 6 CDs of virtually all the Brothers' 1930s recordings. I was thrilled that he did not know of these discs and may even at this moment be listening to those vintage tracks that introduced the boys to the world and has kept them in our affections for 60 years.

But my story is not quite complete. The support act for the Mills Brothers concert was a young Australian singer, Jennifer Green. Jennifer has a beautiful voice and is a tremendous entertainer in her own right; a talent which won her a prestigious 1995 Australian 'Mo' award. It appears she is also somewhat of an entrepreneur and was the driving force behind the

Mills Brothers Australian tour. In speaking with her after the show I was astonished to hear that she is an avid Bing enthusiast and even has a personal friendship with Bing's widow, Kathryn. She spoke of a concert held annually in the USA as a tribute to Bing in which she has some involvement. In our brief meeting I obtained her address and telephone number and said I'd arrange for a copy of BING magazine to be posted to her. This was done with the August issue so there may well be a sequel to relate in a future BING.

Charlie Chapman

(Editor: Fascinating stuff and thanks Charlie. What is this annual concert held in the USA? Can anyone help?)

LEEDS 1995 - the 30th. meeting

Our photographs man, Ron Bosley, puts us in the picture.

The date, Sunday , 1st. October, 1995
The setting, Roundhay Park, Leeds
The weather, a pleasant Autumn day
The event, the 30th. Annual Dinner and meeting at the Mansion House Hotel.

As usual at this affair, many members arrived early and the time was spent in greeting friends and acquaintances, and in browsing through the numerous items of Crosbyana which were on sale or display. This year 57 members were in attendance and the event got officially underway with the address of welcome from Secretary / Treasurer Michael. At these meetings, a special welcome is given to visiting members from overseas and this year the event was graced by the presence of Etty Gits and her compatriots from Holland, Frans Van Der Kolff and Philippe Peerboom. They were accompanied by USA member Stanley Wayman from Danbury, Connecticut.

A further specific welcome was accorded to legendary collector Ralph Harding who, with his wife Diana, was in attendance after a long absence. Later on, many members took the opportunity to renew or make acquaintance with Ralph. For a brief moment, members stood in silent tribute to those who have passed away since the last meeting, including dear friend of many, John Joyce.

Recorded messages were played from Ken Barnes who, at the last moment, had to change his plans and could not be present; and from Gord Atkinson who gave an absorbing account of how, as an 18 year old Canadian soldier in 1945, he first met Bing at Paramount studios. Gord is now recovering from heart surgery and we wish him well. Regretfully, George O'Reilly had to cancel his flight from Dublin, due to the illness of his wife. George has our best wishes for Kate's recovery.

(Left to right) Michael Crampton, Stanley Wayman, Frans Van der Kolff, Etty Gits and Philippe Peerboom.

Members then saw the first part of Jim Reilly's video programme which was to his usual high standard in quality and content. Members might be interested to know that Jim has been presenting his programme since 1985, a total of around 400 songs. The introduction of the large screen projection since last year has certainly enhanced and given a 'cinema' atmosphere to the presentation. This was followed by a short but very entertaining video quiz, presented by former BING editor Ken Crossland, and which members thoroughly enjoyed. Some of the clips shown were quite rare.

During the excellent dinner which followed, some members were intrigued by the sight of a 'mystery' couple who were seen to be browsing through the records and memorabilia displayed nearby. The couple turned out to be Dennis Faulkner and his wife, Moyna, who had heard about the meeting from the Sinatra Society and had come along to check us out. Dennis is now a member and his ambition is to obtain a complete collection of Bing's commercial output.

As the meeting was celebrating a double anniversary, the 30th. event at Leeds and 45 years since the British Crosby Club was first formed, a specially decorated cake had been prepared, and as one of the

special guests of honour, Etty Gits was called upon to cut the cake, which members later found to be excellent.

A vote of thanks was given to Michael for his time and dedication, and to wife Judy for her patience and understanding! This was followed by a short talk given by BING editor Malcolm in which he outlined some of the headaches and difficulties involved not only in producing the magazine, but getting it to members on time. To wind up this stage of the proceedings, Ralph Harding entertained us with some very amusing anecdotes of his experiences as a Crosby collector.

After a short break, Arnold Pope presented his brain teaser of a quiz, which has always been a cornerstone of the Leeds event. Earlier in the proceedings, Michael had exhibited an exceedingly large package which had been sent to him by Marq Stankowski and his daughter Marilee. The contents of the package were now revealed to show several colour enlargements of sheet music covers, featuring Bing, some of these were beautifully framed. It was decided to auction these and at the end of some spirited bidding the sum of £145 had been realised for club funds. A further item from our generous American members, a book compiled from rare sheet music covers and photos of Bing was raffled and brought in the sum of £80. Thus a total of £225 was raised for the benefit of the club. We thank Marq and Marilee for their generosity.

Finally mention must be made of the showing of part of 'Bing: His Legendary Years' on Laserdisc. For most members this was the first time that they had the chance to experience the sound and picture quality provided by this system. The 12" diameter disc resembled a normal audio CD. Thanks are due to Barry Whittingham for giving members the chance to see something which will become more popular in the near future.

Once again time passed all too quickly but before people departed for home they had the chance to see the magnificent display of framed magazine adverts provided by Don and Peter Haizelden.

Next year's meeting is planned for 6th. October 1996.

Ron Bosley

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transactions undertaken as a result of these entries

Please send all advertisements to the Editor

The British Institute of Jazz Studies, 17 The Chase, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG11 6HT (tel 01344 775669)

The British Institute of Jazz Studies (a registered charity), a research archive for jazz, blues and related music, is attempting to complete its collection of BING magazine. Still needed are Nos. 1 to 38, 97, 100 and 105. Donations or offers for sale to Graham Langley, Secretary, address and telephone number as above.

Greenwood Publishing Group, 3 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU

Roger Osterholm's book 'Bing Crosby: A Bio-Bibliography' is still available from this firm for the discounted price of £37.50 (inc. p.& p.) Quote 'BING magazine special offer' when ordering.

Mrs. B. Lloyd, 10 Plas Terrace, Fleur-De-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent NP2 1RP

FOR SALE:- Over 50 Bing Crosby LPs. All excellent condition. Some never played. Very reasonably priced. List on request. All letters answered.

Miss Penelope Wyvol-Thompson, Islay, 32 Chestnut Walk, Bexhill-on-Sea TN39 4PS

FOR SALE:- About 100 Bing 78s. Anyone interested, please make contact.

Philippe Peerboom, Wildenborglaan 2-1, 6825 GB Arnhem, The Netherlands

Philippe is anxious to acquire two Bing books.
1. My Life With Bing - Kathryn Crosby
2. Bing - Charles Thompson

Please write to him with prices.

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 5JX

Sadly no more Alan Dell anniversary programme tributes to Bing. I have quite a few 1 hour and half hour Bing anniversary tributes by Alan Dell on cassettes. Also on cassettes: some fine unusual Bing collections; many of them not available commercially. Please write for details.

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP (tel. 01564 730108)

BINGANG, the official magazine of the American Club Crosby, is published twice yearly and is available from Ken Crossland. Annual subscription £11. For free sample copy, write to Ken enclosing a 36p stamp.

Director Of Marketing, AD Box 100, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA 99258-0001

Gonzaga University is pleased to offer the following gift and souvenir items bearing the Bing Crosby logo in recognition of its Bing Crosby Collection.

Mug Set with 'Bing's Blend' coffee	$30
Mug Set	$23
Ceramic mugs sold separately for	$6
Glass Beverage Set with coffee	$37
Glass Beverage Set	$30
Glass mugs sold separately for	$8
Gold Record Coaster	$12
Golf or Baseball cap	$10

Write direct for further details.

Back Copies of BING

Issues from nos. 93 to 110 (except 97,100, 105) are available for £2 each plus postage. Order from Michael Crampton, address on inside cover of magazine.

The Dean Martin Association, 259 London Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 2RL

For details of Dean Martin's only fully authorised international society, write to Bernard Thorpe at the address shown above. The subscription is 10 and the Association's newsletter "Just Dino" is published a minimum of 4 times a year, sometimes more.

The Sammy Davis Jr Association, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

We have a reciprocal arrangement with this Association. Please write to Paul Iacovou at the above address for details of the club.

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

This club was founded in 1963 and their magazine 'Rainbow Review' is published 4 times a year. SAE to Anthony Scarrott for further details.

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Mark Scrimger, President,
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
P. O. Box 3849, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

BINGthings Society,
5021 57th. Avenue Court West, Tacoma, Washington 98467-4802, USA

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,
John Wright, 17 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Australia

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

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ONCE IN A WHILE

Gary Crosby - we were shocked to read of the death of Gary in August. He was 62 and although he had been an alcoholic in his younger days, he had in recent years returned to the concert stage to sing with the Guy Lombardo Orchestra. The cause of death was eventually given as lung cancer after some secrecy at first. Appaently he had been receiving treatment in hospital using an assumed name and it is believed that the treatment caused a brain tumour which killed him.

All of us are familiar with many of the details of Gary's life and his book 'Going My Own Way' brought him notoriety. It does seem that Gary was often an 'angry' person. We are told that the housekeeper, Georgie Hardwicke, spoiled him and his brothers from a young age and that this was counter-productive to Bing's determination to ensure that they grew up to be independent, well disciplined adults who would make their own way in the world. Bing's efforts to instil discipline led to him being branded by Gary as a cruel father although Gary did separately admit the problems that Bing had in trying to raise his first family. In fact, the notorious book does actually have a happy ending:-

> *I'm happy we made some kind of peace before he went. Neither one of us backed up and neither one of us apologised, yet we made it. We were able to give some love to each other before it was too late. And I'm happy that the last years of his life he was satisfied with me. That's nice. I like that feeling. I'm glad I gave him a little something to be proud of towards the end. I'm especially glad I didn't do it for that reason. I'm glad it just happened that way, that I more or less straightened out on my own and that's what it took to please him.*

Gary will always be remembered for his participation in the world's first double-sided gold record 'Sam's Song / Play a Simple Melody' and of course he made other records with his father and appeared on Bing's radio show before going into show-business as a solo performer as a young man. In the summer of 1954, Gary took over Bing's radio show on CBS for 13 weeks and then went out on the road with the Les Brown band. He came unstuck a little on a tour with Louis Armstrong of Australia in 1956 because of his drinking and then went into the army where by his own admittance he became a fully fledged alcoholic and developed epilepsy. He made several films in the late '50s such as 'Mardi Gras', 'Holiday For Lovers' and 'A Private's Affair' and he formed an act with his brothers in 1959 which enjoyed a fair amount of success for 6 months until a major row caused Gary to leave the group. After a few more years of alcoholism, Gary stopped drinking but found work hard to come by because of the dreadful reputation he had earned. Eventually, he got back into TV having regular parts as 'Eddie' in 'The Bill Dana Show' from 1963 to 1964 and then as Officer Ed Wells in 'Adam 12' from 1968 to 1975. Gary Giddins interviewed Gary some time ago and it will be fascinating to see what the outcome of that meeting was when we read Mr. Giddins' book next year. As mentioned in the last edition of BING, there were plans for Gary to record 'posthumous' duets with his father but whether these tracks were ever prepared I do not know.

Phil Harris died in August at the age of 91. He was by repute Bing's closest friend. They had known each other since the 1920s and they shared many sporting occasions together varying from golf to hunting trips in East Africa. Several of their trips were captured on the American Sportsman television series and something of the camaraderie between the two of them can be seen in these programmes. Phil was born in Indiana but was brought up in Nashville. He was originally a drummer in Francis Craig's 1920s band and he eventually had his own band known as the Dixie Syncopators. He enjoyed several hit solo records with 'That's What I Like About The South' becoming

his trademark song. Many will remember his versions of 'Deck of Cards', 'Woodman, Woodman, Spare That Tree' and 'The Thing' (which reached No. 1 in the USA in 1950). Phil married another show biz legend Alice Faye in 1941 and they co-hosted a half hour radio programme from 1946 to 1954. Phil worked closely with Jack Benny for a while and also made occasional appearances with Bing on radio, TV and film (notably the 1956 version of 'Anything Goes'). Amongst his other films were 'Wabash Avenue' (1956) and 'The High and the Mighty' (1954). His career was in a dormant phase when he was offered the chance to be the voice of Baloo the Bear in Disney's cartoon 'Jungle Book' (1967). He took this opportunity with his usual flair and the song 'The Bare Necessities' was nominated for an Oscar. Phil followed this up with another Disney film 'The Aristocats' in which he provided the voice of O'Malley the alley cat. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Maxene Andrews - one of the two remaining singing Andrews Sisters, who inspired and entertained a generation of Second World War soldiers, died in a Massachusetts hospital at the age of 79 in October. Patty, Maxene and LaVerne Andrews emerged from Minneapolis to become the most popular female vocal group of the 40s. They had No. 1 hits with 'Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen' (1938), 'Ferryboat Serenade' (1940), 'Shoo-Shoo Baby' (1943), 'Rum And Coca-Cola' (1945), 'I Can Dream, Can't I' (1949) and 'I Wanna Be Loved' (1950). All of these tracks were backed by Vic Schoen. Their performances on record with Bing have become legendary and starting with 'Ciribiribin' in 1939, they put together no less than 46 duets and two of these ('A Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin' and 'Don't Fence Me In') went to No. 1 as well. They appeared together with Bing in 'Road to Rio' when they memorably performed 'You Don't Have To Know The Language'. The Sisters made a number of films for Universal in the forties as well. Bing and the Andrews Sisters rarely socialised as evidenced by Maxene's quote in 1992 "Even though we knew very little about Bing's private life, we did meet Dixie once." LaVerne died in 1967 and Patty and Maxene continued to perform for a while and even appeared in the 1974 Broadway musical 'Over There'. Relationships between the two remaining sisters were said to have been strained in recent years and Maxene continued entertaining on her own.

Bing and the sisters at their first ever recording session. Maxene is on the right of the picture.

Alan Dell - born Alan Mandell in South Africa in 1924, Alan passed away on August 18th. after a long battle against cancer. A very well known broadcaster in the UK, he specialised in Big Bands and later British Dance Bands and his weekly Monday night radio programmes focused on these interests. It was his Sunday afternoon BBC Radio 2 series 'Sounds Easy' which kept his name in the limelight in Crosby circles and for over 10 years he had a regular Crosby Corner wherein he featured at least one Bing item each week. On October 11, 1977, Alan interviewed Bing in the BBC studios at Maida Vale and Bing sang eight songs for a radio programme to be broadcast that Christmas. It was Bing's last professional performance and the LP 'Bing - The Final Chapter' is a moving reminder of that occasion.

Trevor Littlechild, the BBC Radio Cambridgeshire broadcaster and sports lover, passed

away in October, aged 61, after a year long fight against cancer. Presenter of the Saturday evening 'Time Was' programme, he regularly featured Bing and his perfectionism ensured a highly researched and enjoyable radio programme. The Managing Editor of BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Nigel Dyson, said, "Trevor will be remembered as a brave, loyal and easy going character, popular and well known in the area. Many hundreds of listeners have mourned his passing and his presence is sadly missed by us all."

Bob Lundberg- As we went to press, we were saddened to learn of the death of Bob. He was of course the driving force behind Bingthings Society & he will be sadly missed. A more detailed tribute will appear in Bing 112.

Propaganda or public interest? - On the Road with Bing and Bob

We were all delighted to see the new video put out by Festival Films in September which contained some very rare material. Sometimes material is rare for a good reason and we asked Ken Crossland to give us his usual independent view in his own inimitable way.

Its probably fair to say that one man's propaganda is another's public interest broadcast and Bob DeFlores' video collection "On The Road With Bing and Bob" provides plenty of examples of the two sides of this particular coin. Apart from the original screen trailer to "Road To Morocco" (you have the film, now see the trailer) and a "Command Performance" broadcast from 1944, the four remaining items in this video collection all have a "public interest" theme.

Rarest of all I suspect is "The Road To Home", a twenty minute film made in 1945 which is quite clearly designed to stop the US Navy deserting in droves! A curious film all round, one can only presume that it was made when victory in Europe was secure and that the Navy were concerned that sailors would conclude for themselves that the war was over and head for home. What we see is Bing and Bob in sailor suits, using clips from their earlier "Road" films to deliver a message of "Hang in there - you've done a great job - don't blow it by becoming a deserter when in a few weeks you'll be a discharged hero".

Sad to say, the public interest gets worse. Whilst one can see the sense of the message in "Road To Home", the "Fifth Freedom" and "You Can Change the World" are two unashamed attempts to promote the American ethos of the "land of the free and the brave" around the world. Bing appears briefly in both, firstly turning up in the "Fifth Freedom" looking like he has just wandered off a "Road" set (boater and checked suit) to sing "You're A Grand Old Flag" and in the second item, singing "Early American" in the middle of a sermon from Father James Keller; - and if you thought the Sunday sermon in your local church was boring, wait until you hear this! "The Road To Peace", third in the "you can change the world" stakes also has a fleeting appearance of our man alongside Ann Blyth.

Going back to the two items which constitute entertainment, the "Road To Morocco" trailer is an interesting example of that particular genre, although most of us I think are so familiar with the film to be unlikely to find anything in it that holds our attention more than once through. "Command Performance" is hosted by Hope, with several wartime stars, although no Bing.

The opening credits contain most of the more interesting material - there are several interesting shots of Bing the sportsman in baseball and racing settings, whilst there's also the end to the Hope film in which Bing appears as the frustrated executioner.

All in all, it's something for the collector who must have everything. For the rest, it's a good cure for insomnia!

Ken Crossland

(Editor: A fair review from Ken but this video does contain some nice Bing songs - 'Early American' and 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling' - and in fact the latter song was long thought to have been a rehearsal for a 'Top O' The Morning' scene. Perry Como and Arthur Godfrey also sing briefly in 'The Fifth Freedom' and the 'Command Performance' film has some rare footage of Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna, June Allyson, Frances Langford and Gloria De Haven in action. If you don't get the video while you can, you may find that it is no longer available. Send a cheque for £16 to R. Dixon Smith, 58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE. If this video is a success, it may encourage the producers to issue a second volume which might well contain more interesting material such as the short film 'Please'.)

The Melody Lingers On

Clive Menadue relives a golden moment from his youth.

Remembering the songs that Bing sang over the years is somewhat akin to counting snowflakes as they fall on a December evening. I know you do it though, and so do I. But I'll bet there's one particular song that takes you back suddenly to the moment when you first heard it, or to some other time when it formed a haunting accompaniment to some other event of importance in your life.

The particular song I'd like to remind you of happens to be a very appropriate one as the festive season draws near. Do you remember 'I'll Be Home For Christmas' ? Of course you do. I believe it was recorded in 1943, but I didn't get to hear it until around 1950 when I was in my late teens and I was standing in a shop doorway on Christmas Eve. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me explain....

I had been invited to a Christmas Eve party together with some other young people. Mike, my best friend, had told me that he would introduce me to his girl's sister and that we'd have a great time. How wrong can you get? It turned out to be one of those get-togethers where you would be inspired to leave Mike Tyson in a broken heap near the door if he had attempted to prevent you leaving. There were no Bing records available and someone played all the records I happened to detest at that time at quite a loud volume. Above that rose the steady roar of intense and humourless conversation. Add to all this the fact that Mike and his girl had left the scene and my female companion had foolishly thrown away her chance of future happiness by leaving my side for the company of a muscular and bronzed sailor, and you will see that the Christmas spirit was seeping down to me like spoonfuls of gruel at a Victorian orphanage. Not surprisingly I decided to leave.

There was a fine rain falling as I walked slowly up the valley along glistening pavements and under misty street lamps until I reached the doorway of Mrs. Goodwin's general store at the end of a long street. I stepped in out of the rain and contemplated a disastrous Christmas Eve. It was 9 p.m. and too early to go home. Just as my eye caught sight of the sparkling tree in the shop window, my ears picked up the sound of Bing's voice drifting out from the living quarters at the rear of the building. Mrs. Goodwin possessed one of the few radiograms in the area and she played one carol after another, and all by Bing. Suddenly the disappointments of the evening all faded to the back of my mind and I felt the old Christmas spell take hold of me once more. Bing could always create a seasonal feeling out of nothing for me. He seemed to have holly and sleighbells and snow caught somewhere in the richness of his voice.

I was so engrossed in the carols that I was startled to find that someone had stepped into the doorway next to me. There was just enough light from a nearby lamp for me to recognise Jean Hunter, a girl who lived at a mountainside farm above the valley. We exchanged greetings and she told me she had quarrelled with her current boy friend and had walked out on him, refusing his offer of a lift home. She was afraid to walk up the farm lane on her own and her parents wouldn't be back from a party until around midnight and she wondered if I would walk her home. At that moment my spirits soared and Bing began to sing 'I'll Be Home For Christmas' in the shop behind me. We both listened for a few moments and Jean asked me if I liked Bing. I told her I couldn't get enough of him.

"I've got a lot of Bing's records including that one," she said. "And I've also got some wine up at the farm. Now will you walk me home?"

At that moment I was ten yards ahead of her. The sky gradually cleared as we climbed the steep lane to

the farm and stars clustered here and there. This, I thought, was something like a Christmas. We drank some wine by a roaring fire that evening and we listened to many of Bing's records. I soon knew 'I'll Be Home For Christmas' by heart.

Jean's parents turned up just after midnight and gave me some old fashioned looks to begin with but they soon saw me for what I was, namely, one of nature's gentlemen with the kind of good looks that you have to tone down if you want to avoid the undue attentions of the opposite sex. I had a last drink with them and we exchanged seasonal greetings. Jean wanted me to kiss her goodnight at the door and I agreed, though I knew I'd be playing football for Pantgwn seconds on Boxing Day and was in strict training. As I started off back down the hill, I turned and waved to her silhouette framed in the bright doorway. She waved back. On my way home I twisted my mouth into an appropriate position and did an impression of Bing singing 'I'll Be Home For Christmas.' It wasn't very good. Well, I suppose Bing did a very poor impression of me!

I saw Jean a few more times but her family were in the process of selling up and they left in the Spring. I never saw her again, but what a Christmas Eve that was. I don't suppose there's anything more I can add except to wish all ICC members a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. I think I'll just put that record on again....

Clive Menadue

P.S. A very large, angry and evil looking man called at my house recently claiming to be Elisha Cook Senior and demanding the address of someone called Lionel Pairpoint. When I refused to give him this information he proceeded to tear my front door from its hinges with one hand. He should be arriving at your place anytime now Lionel, ...er, sorry.

KEITH PARKINSON'S CELLULOID CROSBY

At this mid-point in the decade, I'm going to update three ongoing series which have been running in BING magazine since the 1970s. These attempt to cover:
a) Bing's unrealised film projects.
b) Bing's depiction in animated cartoons, and
c) The use of the Crosby voice on film soundtracks.
The cartoons listing relies on sightings on television and video. The animation units of the major studios have long since closed so the 'new' additions are mainly vintage efforts coming to my attention for the first time. The list of unrealised projects grows as fresh information comes to light. This is usually from interviews and biographies by Bing's contemporaries. The voice over films tend to be recent productions and turn up at the rate of one a year on average.

Unrealised Projects
In 1936 the separate film companies of Fox and Twentieth Century amalgamated and Darryl F. Zanuck became head of Twentieth Century-Fox. Zanuck saw musicals as being the answer to the flagging fortunes of the two individual companies that had merged. His first film was 'Metropolitan' with Lawrence Tibbett: it flopped. As a musical it was too heavy and much was now riding on his second film. He decided to write this one himself. He used the alias Melville Crossman and wrote 'Thanks a Million' with Bing in mind as a crooner who accidentally runs for Governor. Dick Powell eventually played the Crosby inspired role and the film was a great success.

In Rudy Vallee's autobiography, 'Let The Chips Fall', he tells how he almost lost the part he had made famous in the stage version of 'How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying'. For three years Vallee had been playing J.B.Biggley in the Broadway production and he had never missed a performance. When the film version was being cast, Bing was considered for the role because Vallee was a health risk, due to his age. Nor was he considered strong 'box office', but in the event, he reprised his Biggley part in the 1967 movie.

August 1975 saw initial publicity for what was projected as the last Road picture of all. A script had been delivered to Hope and Crosby which bore the title 'Road To Tomorrow'. Bob Hope commented: "I prefer the title 'Road To The Fountain Of Youth' but in any case we play ourselves. It starts with Bing and I taking our grandchildren to the airport and meeting each other again after all these years. We tell each other how good we're looking at our age and before you know it, we're on a plane to London and off on another mystery. Of course, along the way we bump into Mother Lamour." Bing commented on the planned movie for the Chicago Tribune. The August 25th. 1975 issue carried his

comment, "We've got to get more lunacy into the script. When you've got two old guys you've got to do something wild." The film's tentative shooting schedule was finally arranged for England. The original location work embracing Saudi Arabia, Moscow and London was far too ambitious for a film with only average box office clout. The start date was to be mid 1977 to coincide with Bing's last UK tour. It was Bing's accident at the Pasadena concert which resulted in the film's postponement (and ultimate cancellation). Admirers of the Paramount Road pictures were no doubt relieved that Hope and Crosby did not have to undergo a potentially humiliating experience.

Cartoons

In the early 1930s, Universal decided to combat the success of Disney's popular 'Silly Symphonies' series with a number of two-colour Technicolor cartoons from Walter Lantz known as 'Cartune Classics'. Disney had exclusive rights to the new three-colour Technicolor process for cartoon purposes which forced all competitors to use the old two-colour system unless they contented themselves with the still prevalent black and white cartoons. Lantz directed six 'Cartune Classics' and the short released in the USA on 10th. December, 1934 concerns us here. It was called 'Toyland Premier'. Set at Christmastime, Santa is in the middle of his deliveries and is crying because he has no traditional red suit to wear, a situation soon remedied by his elves. Santa then calls at a party attended by Bing, Shirley Temple, Laurel and Hardy and others, with each guest having to perform a party piece. Bing 'boo-boo-boos' and later serenades Santa with a snippet about Christmas gift lists. The film ends with the other cartoon characters singing their gift requests to Santa.

In 1937 Warner Bros. released 'The Woods Are Full Of Cuckoos'. This cartoon short depicted animal parodies of celebrities. Starring alongside Bing Crowsby were the likes of Fred McFurry and W.C. Fieldmouse. Studios tended to promote their own contract players and it is unusual to find Warners using Paramount and Universal talent. One year later the same studio made 'Wholly Smoke'. The Director was Frank Tashlin who later progressed to working with real people when he made his name as a master of broad comedy features such as 'The Girl Can't Help It'. His 1938 six minute effort starred Porky Pig and carried a mild anti-smoking message. A variety of celebrity caricatures are seen to come to life, including Bing, The Mills Brothers, Cab Calloway, Rudy Vallee and the Three Stooges.

Warner Brothers were again responsible for 'Hollywood Daffy' made in 1946. Directed by Friz Freeleng, it starts with Daffy Duck walking onto the Warner lot and attempting to pass the studio guard by disguising himself. In the guise of Bing, he puts a pipe into his mouth and croons 'When My Dreamboat Comes Home'. Sadly, his ruse does not fool the studio guard, which is unfortunate because Mel Blanc provided a very passable impression of Bing's voice.

Bing's voice on the soundtrack

One Magic Christmas (1985). Denied a theatrical release in the UK, this Canadian tear jerker has the warm glow of the season of goodwill that we've come to expect of any movie made by the Walt Disney studio that features Christmas. Mary Steenburgen and film husband Gary Basaraba are finding it hard to cope following job redundancy. Half way through the film they have a heart to heart in their kitchen. The radio plays softly in the background and Bing's Decca recording of 'I'll Be Home For Christmas' adds poignancy to a situation where it looks as though the family will be homeless before too long. Basaraba is shot dead in a bank raid but all ends well thanks to the most unlikely guardian angel in the image of Harry Dean Stanton.

Christmas Comes To Tattertown. (1988). This is the second of three Yuletide films in this update. It is a thirty minute cartoon first shown on television in the USA in 1988. It is a children's story which adults are able to enjoy. The simple plot concerns a doll called Muffet who hates Christmas and the sentiment surrounding the season of goodwill. Her supporters are Sidney the Spider and his aide, a fly. They eventually rebel against Muffet and fling her into prison. And what changes their attitude to Muffet? Debbie, the doll's owner, who puts on Bing's recording of 'White Christmas' and reduces the spider and the fly to tears. The cartoon has a mature following because Ralph Bakshi, its producer, introduced viewers to the World's first X-rated cartoon when he made 'Fritz The Cat' in the 1970s.

Lady In White (1988). This film's plot is concerned with a girl murdered in 1952. Halfway through this supernatural thriller is a sequence set at Christmastime, 1963. We see a shot of a portable record player. Without assistance the turntable starts to revolve and the tone arm descends onto a 78. Bing sings 'Did You Ever See a Dream Walking' and young Frankie, the film's main character played by Lucas Haas, descends the stairs and sees the ghost of the murdered girl. The song itself has a significant part to play in the film's plot. As the end credits roll, the Crosby vocal is reprised, followed by the lyrics being picked up by a childish voice intended to be that of the murdered girl. It creates a suitably eerie effect. It is interesting to note that this same 1933 Crosby recording was used three years earlier over the end credits of 'A Nightmare On Elm Street, Part 2'.

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989) This is the third Christmas film. It charts the ongoing misfortunes of the American Griswold family. Chevy Chase is again cast as Clark W. Griswold Jnr, for whom disaster looms round every corner. In 'Christmas Vacation' he has spent his Christmas bonus on a swimming pool for his garden before he realises that his bonus probably won't materialise. In a scene set just before Christmas Day, he gazes wistfully into the distance and a sequence illustrates his dreams: a large swimming pool on a hot summer's day surrounded by bikini clad girls. Whoever selected the soundtrack song to accompany this scene knew popular music. The item that blends Christmas sentiment with the warm outdoors happens to be the Hawaiian song 'Mele Kalikimaka', sung by Bing and the Andrews Sisters. The song comes from a Decca session of 6th. September, 1950, when the foursome recorded another seasonal item - 'Poppa Santa Claus'. A further nod to the Crosby influence on Christmas comes at the Griswolds' darkest hour when the family guests pack to leave and disasters surround them. Chevy Chase bars their way, grits his teeth and says, "Nobody leaves. This is going to be the happiest Christmas since Bing Crosby tap danced with Danny Kaye." An entertaining family film that will no doubt receive its fair share of showings on Christmastime television.

The Troubles We've Seen (1994) This documentary by Marcel Ophuls won the International Critics Prize at the 32nd. New York film festival. It is a history of War correspondents and how news is filtered before it reaches readers, viewers and listeners. The war in Sarajevo is prominently featured and Ophuls' uses the technique of juxtaposing apparently unrelated film clips in order to make a point. In 'November Days' (1991), listed earlier in this series, Ophuls used Bing's recording of "Song Of Freedom' to good effect. In this new documentary, footage of sledding in the Bosnian mountains is inter cut with Bing singing 'White Christmas'.

CORRECTION

In Issue #109 of BING, the entry for Ray Evans in the A-Z stated that his music collaborator on the songs he wrote for Bing was Frank Loesser. Charles Baillie, a personal friend of Ray Evans, rightly points out that Jay Livingston was the other half of the partnership for all the Crosby film songs. Indeed, it was the Evans-Livingston partnership that also authored such hits as 'Mona Lisa.' My apologies for the error.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith's epic series picks up some more of the detail behind Bing's films as he completes the F's.

FOSTER, Lewis R. (1900 - 1974). Screenwriter/Director. For the writing phase of his Hollywood career, he was billed as Lew Foster and as such appeared on the credits of three Mack Sennett shorts: 'One More Chance,' 'Dream House' and 'Billboard Girl.' All were filmed in 1931 and Foster shared the story and dialogue captions with John A. Waldron, Earle Rodney and Harry McCoy. Why four brains were needed for these one-reeler shorts is a mystery to this day. Before his Sennett assignment, he had been script supervisor and gag writer for Hal Roach and it was then that he carried out his first directorial chores on Laurel and Hardy shorts. The quality of his writing improved to such an extent that he won an Academy Award for 'Mr. Smith Goes To Washington' (1939). When he moved over to directing, he continued to contribute to the screen plays of his films. They were almost always low-budget, run-of-the-mill adventure pics with exciting titles to persuade young lads to part with sixpence to see such fare as 'Captain China' (1950), 'Passage West' (1951), 'Tropic Zone' (1953) and 'Dakota Incident' (1956). There was one non-typical project in 1953 when Paramount used him to write and direct the Guy Mitchell - Teresa Brewer musical comedy 'Those Redheads From Seattle.'

FOSTER, Stephen (1826 - 1864). Songwriter. Stephen Collins Foster never wrote a song which failed to stick in the memory. His melodies were hummable and his lyrics poignant. A stateside revival of interest in Foster beginning in the late thirties / early forties is partly attributable to a film biography starring Don Ameche called 'Swanee River' and partly to Bing regularly featuring Foster's compositions on the Kraft Music Hall radio show. Bing sang two of Foster's songs in three films. 'Swanee River' was in 'Mississippi' (1935) and 'Road To Rio' (1948). Bing sang it with the Cabin Kids in the former and with Bob Hope in the 'Road' picture. In 1950, he sang 'Camptown Races' in 'Riding High' accompanied by Coleen Gray and Clarence Muse. Decca/Brunswick released a ten inch album called 'Bing Crosby Sings Stephen Foster' which can

be played frequently without the listener tiring of the eight tracks. Foster died a penniless alcoholic.

FOY, Eddie Jnr (1905 -). Actor. There is a scene in 'Dixie' (1943) where two penniless boarders sing 'Laughing Tony' to the actor Billy De Wolfe. The singer with the prominent upper lip is Eddie Foy Jnr. It was his only appearance in a Crosby film in a forty year career in the movies. He never found fame but came close to it in the 1950s. That was when Bob Hope made 'The Seven Little Foys' and revived interest in the vaudeville family, followed two years later in 1957 by Foy starring on screen in the hit musical 'The Pajama Game.' He had already enjoyed a long run on Broadway in the stage production. He bore a remarkable resemblance to his famous comedian father who died in 1928 and Eddie Jnr played his dad on screen in such as 'Frontier Marshall' (1939), 'Lilian Russell' (1940), 'Yankee Doodle Dandy' (1942) and 'Wilson' (1944). His last memorable film was the 1960 musical 'Bells Are Ringing.'

FRANK, Melvin (1913 - 1988). Director, screenwriter and producer. Mel Frank's movie associations with Bing began on a modest scale. He collaborated with Norman Panama on the story of the Bob Hope starrer 'My Favourite Blonde' (1942) in which Bing made a guest appearance. Equally tenuous was his next connection, when he contributed to sketches for 'Star Spangled Rhythm' (1942), another film with a Crosby guest spot. Similarly Bing guested in 'Duffy's Tavern' (1945), by which time Frank was again working with Norman Panama to provide both screenplay and sketch material. His first full blown Crosby assignment was to write the screenplay for 'Road to Utopia' (1946), again with Norman Panama. Eight years elapsed before his most successful job came along - to write the screenplay for 'White Christmas' together with Panama and Norman Krasna. A further eight years passed by which time he was producer and screen-writer of 'The Road to Hong Kong', alongside Panama. The Panama link goes back to schooldays when they wrote a play together but after their 'Hong Kong' venture, Frank went it alone as Director-Producer-Screenwriter. He based his company in England and enjoyed success with the likes of 'A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum' (1966), 'A Touch Of Class' (1973) and 'Lost and Found' (1979).

FRAWLEY, William (1887 - 1966). Actor. For ten years Frawley appeared half way down the cast list in the films he made with Bing Crosby. He was James Smith in 'Here Is My Heart' (1934), John Pederson in 'Double Or Nothing' (1937), Phil Westlake in 'Rhythm On The River' (1940) and Max Dolan in 'Going My Way' (1944). But to most people he was Fred Mertz in 'I Love Lucy' on television between 1951 and 1960. A former vaudevillian, he was a gruff, amiable character in over a hundred and fifty Hollywood films before television made him truly famous. After his last film with Bing he was in such popular fare as 'Ziegfield Follies' (1946), 'Mother Wore Tights' (1947) and 'The Lemon Drop Kid' (1951). When his 'Lucy' appearances ended he had a three year run in another popular series 'My Three Sons.' His isolated return to the big screen was made in 1962 in the film 'Safe At Home.'

FREED, Arthur (1894 - 1973) Producer and lyricist. Freed was respected the world over as the former but his songwriting talents concern us here. Bing sang his lyrics on six occasions during the 1933 picture 'Going Hollywood' The songs were the title number, the big hit and subsequent standard 'Temptation' and 'We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines.' 'Our Big Love Scene,' 'After Sundown' and 'Beautiful Girl.' Nacio Herb Brown provided melodies for words. Freed's first successful composition was 'I Cried For You.' His partnership with Brown has left us humming the likes of 'You Were Meant For Me,' 'You Are My Lucky Star,' 'Singin' In The Rain' and 'All I Do Is Dream Of You.' His fame for decades to come is doubly assured because of the high quality musicals he produced for MGM. He was associate producer of 'Wizard Of Oz' in 1939 before taking full responsibility for over forty fondly remembered escapist musicals. I'll restrict myself to listing my ten favourites: 'Meet Me In St. Louis' (1944), 'The Harvey Girls' (1946), 'Till The Clouds Roll By' (1946), 'Easter Parade' (1948), 'On The Town' (1949), 'Annie Get Your Gun' (1950), 'An American In Paris' (1951), 'The Band Wagon' (1953), ' Brigadoon' (1954) and 'Gigi' (1958). The most famous musical of all time isn't there but that's because I've seen it so often. It is 'Singin' in the Rain' (1952) for which he also wrote the songs. His career waned in the early sixties with the demise of the screen musical. His last major success was 'Bells Are Ringing' in 1960.

FREEMAN, Mona (1926 -) Actress. There are no doubts that Bing was fond of Miss Freeman. He dated her openly after the death of his first wife. He did not, however, use his pull with Paramount to find her parts in his own movies for that studio. As a result, the three Crosby pictures in which she appeared only provided glimpses of this attractive ex-professional model. She had a bit part in 'Here Come The Waves' (1944), was seen on the Paramount backlot in 'Variety Girl' (1947) and is a spectator in the same audience crowd as Bing in 'The Greatest Show On Earth' (1952). Fortunately she was seen in more substantial big screen acting

roles until her retirement from show business at the end of the fifties. Her Hollywood career began as a teenager when she was signed up by Howard Hughes who then sold her contract to Paramount. She played the innocent bright eyed teenager in the likes of 'National Velvet' (1944) and 'Black Beauty' (1946). Her adult roles became meatier but the films themselves were less important. The best was 'The Heiress' (1949) but by the middle of the next decade she was in forgettable B productions like 'Huk' (1956) and 'Dragoon Wells Massacre' (1957).

Bing with Mona Freeman

FRIENDLY MOUNTAINS, THE Song. One of the best staged Crosby vocals in any Crosby movie. Bing sings it in 'The Emperor Waltz' (1948) in a scene set in the Austrian Tyrol. The location of Canada's Jasper park provided a breath taking backdrop as Bing strolled along singing this Johnny Burke, Joseph J. Lilley composition with the mountain echoes playing the part of the vocal chorus.

FROM THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD. Song. The 1935 release 'Two For Tonight' contained five Mack Gordon - Harry Revel compositions. This bouncy number is sung by Bing to leading lady Joan Bennett.

FUNNY OLD HILLS. Song. Listing a trio of Crosby film songs consecutively serves as a reminder that Bing's composers served him well. This opus was good enough to open and close the proceedings in the 1939 Paramount production 'Paris Honeymoon'. It was written by dependable tunesmiths Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger. The plot begins to unfold with Bing preparing for his wedding to Shirley Ross. He sings 'Funny Old Hills' as he dresses. The film's closing scenes depict Bing driving away with butler Edward Everett Horton and new love Franciska Gaal. The trio reprise 'Funny Old Hills' and the caption 'The End' comes up.

FURSE, ROGER K. (1903-1972) Art Director and production designer. It was the latter credit given to Furse for the work on Bing's British made Road picture. I thought the overall look of 'The Road To Hong Kong' tacky in parts with cardboard looking sets indicating a modest budget. Perhaps Furse did the best he could with the money available. By the time the film was released in 1962 he was well known for his collaborations with Sir Laurence Olivier as set designer. His most colourful work was done for MGM's British based studio in the early 1950s with 'Ivanhoe' (1952) and 'Knights of the Round Table' (1953). He started his career at the top by winning an Oscar for designing costumes for 'Hamlet' (1945). It's slightly sad to think that his last assignment was the less worthy 'Hong Kong'.

Some new Bing films?

Ron Bosley came across the following advert in Variety magazine of December 31, 1930.

VARIETY

THE THREE RHYTHM BOYS

Harry Barris, Bing Crosby and Al Rinker appear nightly at the Hotel Ambassador's smart Cocoanut Grove in Los Angeles, and doubling for three weeks into the Paramount theatre, Los Angeles.

Try and find us in "Many a Slip," "Those Three French Girls," "Check and Double Check," "Reaching for the Moon."

Current song hits: "I Surrender" and "It Must Be True."

We were fascinated to read about the films 'Many a Slip' and 'Those Three French Girls' and reference was quickly made to Keith Parkinson. Unfortunately Keith cannot trace either of these films and members comments would be welcomed.

Also, Robert Achorn wrote about another 'lost' Bing film and we quote from his letter as follows:

In his excellent new history of early sound musicals, A Shot in the Dark, Richard Barrios discusses MGM's never released 'The March of Time'. Scenes were filmed in the fall of 1929 and the winter of 1930. Barrios mentions the filming of an "enormous" two-strip Technicolor production number with a giant violin cavorting on screen, and Bing Crosby just off-camera singing "Poor Little G-String." That was before the era of pre-recording and dubbing. Musical numbers were filmed simultaneously.....Barrios bases his information on the MGM production files at the University of Southern California, so it sounds basically reliable.

Both 'King of Jazz' and 'The March of Time' were shot in the general span of time, although probably on different movie lots. (The shortage of Technicolor sound cameras sometimes led one studio to rent time and camera stages on the sound stages of another, but it seems likely that MGM used its own studios, not Universal's, for a major production number.)

'The March of Time' was conceived as a tribute to the history of American show business, but MGM could never pull the film together. It put the footage on the shelf. In late 1930, some of its production numbers were patched into a German-language MGM film shot in Hollywood (English title: 'We Broadcast From Hollywood'.) Was the Crosby number one of them? Who knows? More of the production numbers were cut into MGM's 1933 film, 'Broadway to Hollywood', and into some short subjects. Whether "Poor Little G-String" survived and was released in any of those forms is unclear. Maybe the footage was tossed away: maybe it endures in some remote corner of the universe. (MGM's 'The March of Time' should not be confused with Time magazine's news-oriented short subjects of the same title, produced from 1935 to 1951. A clip of Bing was used in a later edition of that series, celebrating stars of the 1940s.)

Finally, in the 1936 Broadway stage musical, 'Ziegfeld Follies', the first-act finale made fun of Technicolor film musicals. The star movie character in the finale bore the combination name of Bing Powell. (Powell for the then-popular singer, Dick Powell; Bing for we-know-who.) And who played Bing in the scene? None other than Bob Hope. So it's clear that - on stage - Hope was imitating and kidding Crosby more than a year before Hope appeared in a feature film and 4 years before he co-starred with Bing.

Well, there's something to think about! Has Mr. Barrios got confused between 'The King of Jazz' and 'The March of Time' or is he right? Again readers views on the missing film would be welcomed and we eagerly await comments.

May we take this opportunity to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue.

Peter Cakanic, 11 Teal Court, North Augusta, SC 29841-3276, USA

Can members imagine a 'Radio Hall of Fame' without Bing in it? Well it exists as part of the Museum of Broadcasting in Chicago. Last year when I visited my hometown, I noticed Bing wasn't honored. I wrote to 'Nostalgia' magazine, which ran a cover story on Bing last year. My letter enquiring why Bing wasn't a 'famer' was printed and the Editor said, "he had to be nominated." I understand that he now (finally) has been nominated. If members want to put some pressure on the powers that be, write to: Radio Hall of Fame, Museum of Broadcast Communications, 78 East Washington Bl, Chicago, Ill 60602, USA.
(Editor: I've already written and could our USA members in particular respond to Peter's appeal so that Bing is appropriately recognised.)

Michael Collins, Florida, USA

....I am at present reading a selection of Daphne Du Maurier's letters, which has just been published here in the U.S. For some reason, she always signed her name (and was known to her intimate friends as) 'Bing'. [Not many people know that.] However, neither this book nor her biography gives any explanation for this unusual nickname, except to observe that she was given to inventing a private language with which friends were expected to become familiar. A glossary is provided at the front so that the reader has to flit back and forth. Very odd.
(Editor: Yes, very strange. Does anyone know why Daphne was known as 'Bing' ?)

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX

Enclosed is a photo from a magazine dealing with the international racing classic, the St. Leger. I remember in the sixties, when Bing was a regular visitor to the St. Leger racing season, people in the town centre in various queues 'buzzing' that Bing was at the races. Not Bing Crosby but Bing. I recall the local paper putting photos of Bing in their shop window showing him hamming it up slightly for the local press by waving his arms about pretending to be a bookie. At the time I regarded Bing and his voice as being as constant as what tap water used to be or popular music and just took it all for granted. Now I regret not going to have a look at Bing and perhaps getting a snapshot of him.

The late Bing Crosby was one of the first showbiz celebrities to become a regular at Doncaster

There was a report in the local press of that time which revealed Bing in a characteristic light. It is well known locally that the Queen at the time liked to attend the classic season of the races and of course there is a special royal box at Doncaster. The Queen could not always attend however and once the authorities offered Bing the vacant royal box. Bing declined modestly stating that the people would not want to see an ageing crooner in place of their Queen. Bing always stayed at the Punch's Hotel when attending the races and at that time I had a close acquaintance who worked there. Once he told me quite involuntarily that Bing's behaviour and manner was always impeccable. When Bing finished his stay there he always left a large contribution for the staff. My acquaintance said that Bing was one of nature's gentlemen.
(Editor: Some nice memories from Doncaster, whilst in Florida, Bing's name is prominent...)

Roger Osterholm, 303 Timberline Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32174, USA

....The TV show and the radio program I was on were to discuss Crosby and my book on him. Also, the London Symphony Orchestra just completed a series of concerts here in Daytona Beach for the 1995 Florida International festival, and the final program was a group from New Yok city called the Manhattan Rhythm Kings. Their write-up in the local paper said, "The tunes of Bing Crosby and other Swing era vocal groups are the sounds preferred by..." the trio. The headline went, "City crooners sing Bing'" Their show was on Sunday, August 13, at a beachside hotel. $32 a ticket.
(Editor: See Trading Post for details of how to obtain Roger's book.)

Ron Bosley, 10 Fountains Avenue, Simonstone

I found John Sawbridge's letter in BING 110 most interesting. In it he describes how he listened to the American east coast radio stations on the medium wave band. I too have had a similar experience. In 1943, I was serving in the RAF, in North Africa. In those days I was fascinated by the wonder of radio and when not flying, I would ensconce myself in the signals office where I had the use of a couple of spare radio receivers. But what has all this to do with Bing I hear you ask? I will tell you. On these receivers I was able to pick up the medium wave stations on the American east coast. The sound was by no means perfect, but listenable. I particularly remember Baltimore and the New York stations WEAF and WJZ. I even picked up Wheeling, West Virginia! For several weeks I heard Bing on the Kraft show on WEAF, then as summer approached these stations faded out. All this was a phenomenon which needed certain conditions. Medium waves are usually transmitted in a straight line. Once they go over the curve of the Earth they go off into space and out of the range of distant listeners. But at certain times of year, notably winter, the atmosphere levels (there are several), drop nearer to the Earth. The signals are then reflected back before they become too weak to be heard by distant locations. With short wave radio however, the signals are purposely angled up to the atmosphere levels so that they bounce back to earth, many thousands of miles from their starting point. This is known as the 'skip distance'.

I can still remember and relive the excitement of 'picking up' those distant places. Now we see instant pictures from anywhere in the world!

A final query. In BING 109, Thomas Mooney identified the unknown man in the gym with Bing as Al Silvani. I have just come across a cutting showing a very similar looking man who is named as Jim Davies. Is it the same man?

John Bignell, 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2QB

I have a query about something that has puzzled me for years. It concerns 'Love Is Just Around The Corner'. Bing warbles in that sensational 1934 voice of his:

I'm ten times as faithful as all your other men,
They all are true to no-one but you,
But me, I'm true to ten.

Am I being more than normally stupid when I ask: "What exactly does Bing mean?" I consulted the definitive source, i.e. The Crosby Collection - Part One, page 203, wherein Fred Reynolds does full justice to this great example of the Crosby style and attack which made him the genius he undoubtedly was BUT Fred's masterly appraisal did not mention the above cryptic (to me anyway) passage. Who can help me, please?

LIONEL'S LINES

"JUST LIKE THE ONES I USED TO KNOW"

Commerce, has never really been my 'bag'. The elaborate process of transferring a pound from someone else's pocket into my own, leaves me as cold as a frog in an icebound pool. Yet things weren't always this way. As a child, my brain seethed with monetary invention. In today's world, it is likely that I would have 'borrowed' a pair of pliers

and for a small fee, removed those 1992 Comic Relief Red Noses that persist in adorning radiator grilles but when I was only as high as the wheel of the milkman's cart, there were fewer windscreens to wipe and cars to wash. Business could be very seasonal for budding moguls. Spring heralded the gathering of horse manure. This was a non-starter. I loathed rhubarb and feeling worthy of higher things than the purveyance of ordure, I chose beating the same out of neighbours' carpets with an ancient tennis racquet. The profit margins involved, hardly warranted a probe into directors' salaries and arm-numbing labour aside, this usually entailed, arriving home, in a grey patina of dust, to the inevitable parental recriminations.

Of course, in those days, Summers were hotter. Therefore, people should have been thirstier and anyone with a modicum of business acumen, two ounces of lemonade powder and unrestricted access to the kitchen tap would, surely, have become a soft drinks tycoon, in next to no time. Not so! I could tell by the wrinkling of sundry noses at the murky contents of the (freshly washed) jam jars that I was on to another lossleader which left only 'The Grotto'. Now, 'Grottoes' (or 'Grotters', in the vernacular) may have been unique to my neck of the woods and again required minimum capital - a paper bagful of dirt, a few stolen blossoms and one was in business. The soil was dribbled in intricate patterns on the pavement into which the flowerheads were planted, in order to create, a rather effective, still life. On occasions, this refined form of begging could be quite rewarding. Old ladies would stop and stare, in wonderment (or in vague recognition of their own property) and might drop a halfpenny in the tin provided. There was, however, a hidden health hazard to this occupation - the local bully was liable to appear and with one sweep of his boot, kick twelve, solid minutes of painstaking industry into one's face.

The crew of the 'Rainbow Warrior' would not have been too keen, had they seen us, launching our Autumn attack on the trees in the local spinney, with rusty saw and blunt chopper. Firewood and logs were much in demand and local tradesmen were pestered for apple or soap boxes for conversion to kindling and although a few coppers might be earned, by this means, we were often advised that our wares were "too damp", "too thin", "too thick" or "too little", necessitating their confiscation, without payment, to prevent us "robbing someone else". My favourite time was Winter. Guy Fawkes' Day could be a colossal money spinner - sheer lack of space prevents me regaling you with the near-tragic story of young Cyril Biggs - the "human guy", whose brilliant, if impassive performance netted the Company, an astonishing 1/7d. Now, a fiscal tip! Please advise your young relations that, for maximum return, carol singing must be confined, only, to Christmas Eve. Our "pigeons", for this enterprise, were chosen with scrupulous care and Sunday School Teachers were a prime target. At this juncture, I should mention that I attended an old-fashioned Church School ("Headmaster: Dr H Yaxley - Boys Trained") where the class teachers were in the habit of doing a "gig" at the Chapel on Sundays.

Enter Miss Gelly, a Scots spinster, who, in the modern idiom, might be described as "a whole lotta woman". In fact, her ample proportions, inspired some of the coarser boys to invent a rhyming couplet, including her surname, to which, may I add, I never subscribed. For, in spite of the incipient moustache and thick lisle stockings, I was totally besotted with a lady, whose generosity, belied that reputation, (unfairly) accorded to her kinsfolk. She was a "brick" and being boys, we naturally, took full advantage of her kindly nature. Miss Gelly (the "G" was soft as in "touch"!), lived with her elderly mother (She had to be the wrong side of 50!), in a large house with a drive. Further signs of affluence were a telephone and a bathroom and as soon as the street lamps began to twinkle, on Christmas Eve, four "wise boys" would "travel afar", to her doorstep. We were ushered into the drawing-room, with an "Och", a "Losh" and "Ye mist be froozen", to perform our entire repertoire while "Mam" fussed in the kitchen, preparing mince pies and cups of cocoa.

Miss Gelly's quiet contralto often accompanied us for some of the carols and during our brisk version of "Silent Night", she might be heard to murmur, "Adagio, boys, adagio". Youthful ignorance persuaded us that this was a Gaelic form of "Bravo!", causing us to increase the volume another notch and accelerate a little more. But the end result was always the same. An incredible, extraordinary, HALF-CROWN!, was pressed into each of our sticky palms - at that time, the sum total of such munificence, represented a full day's pay for a grown man!

No need now for an extended concert tour. Having amassed five weeks pocket money in one fell swoop, any further door-knocking and bell-ringing would have been superfluous. So, a whooping quartet raced to their respective homes. After all, there were still paper chains to make and hang, the Christmas edition of "Monday Night At Seven", on the wireless and then to bed, still fondling that precious, silver coin, dreamily planning next year's festive recital and hoping that when Santa delivered, he wouldn't overlook the Meccano set, together with the

"Wizard" and "Hotspur" Annuals that he had hidden, on top of the wardrobe, in mid-October.

I must confess that I wasn't too conversant with Bing Crosby's activities, during this period. I was aware that he was a famous film star, who sang a bit but it is doubtful that I would have emulated his philanthropy, by donating the "royalties" from my rendition of "Silent Night" to charity. It is uncertain when this song, together with "Adeste Fideles", began to be regularly featured in his Christmas radio show but there is no doubt that the tradition was consolidated during his tenure at the "Kraft Music Hall" and it seems that the first, existing, audio confirmation of this occurs with a recording of the whole programme of 24 December 1942. But before discussing this, let me go back, in the series, to Christmas Day 1941. So far as I am aware, no copies of this show, survive and there is also some contention regarding the titles broadcast on this occasion.

Reason demands that both "Adeste" and "Silent" should have been there although there is strong support, (due to the United States' recent entry into the War), for "The Star Spangled Banner" taking precedence as the "opener". Others put forward include, "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" and two Irving Berlin songs, "Oh! How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning" and the extraordinary "White Christmas"! Disbelief, immediately clouds the mind - "Hold on. Berlin only arrived in early November and the cameras hadn't started rolling yet". Yes, they had. "Holiday Inn" was already several weeks into production by Christmas and the songwriter travelled again to the West coast on 21 March to view the final cut. "Wait a minute, the song wasn't published or copyright applied for until 6 May 1942" (In 1909, an amendment to the copyright laws required the date of first publication to be entered on the application for copyright). Not unparalleled. "Star Dust" was recorded a full year before its publication. "Yeah, well why weren't the newspapers full of it the next day?" Very simple. Nobody recognised it. It was a nothing song. Even the composer lacked faith in the refrain that was to become the biggest "sleeper" of all time. When the songs from the film were aired in June/July 1942, the song-pluggers put their money on, "Be Careful It's My Heart" and to a lesser extent, the "flag-waver", "Song Of Freedom".

In spite of his possibly, apocryphal, remark, "You don't have to worry about this one, Irving", Bing did not sing "White Christmas" on his radio programme again, until the next October, at which time, it had already achieved "hit" status and although performed on other occasions, he never used it on another Christmas show, during the Kraft series. I am confident that it did appear in that broadcast on 25 December 1941. The best measure of proof being a surviving copy of, "Let's Start The New Year Right", written for the same film, from the very next programme. The tragedy is that the historic, first hearing, of the song is apparently, lost for ever and we are unlikely to discover how Bing and the Music Maids(?) handled it or if Mr Trotter's arrangement was the same as that used on the commercial versions.

The 1942 programme, referred to previously, had a uniqueness of its own. For some time there had been dark mutterings regarding the Kraft Music Hall. The essence of the argument was, that there was too much "gab" and not enough use of Crosby - he sang too infrequently. This was "watered down" when the new season began in October 1942 to, "each programme will have 8-10 musical items". Had Bing had something to say about a possible extra workload? The whole affair became academic, anyway. The Christmas Eve presentation was the penultimate programme in the 60 minute format. Starting in the New Year the shows were reduced to 30 minutes. This was a direct result of the war. More cheese than ever was being produced but the Government had blocked off large allocations for the armed forces and lend-lease, requiring sales promotion to yield to an elementary, goodwill exercise.

It would be less than critical to say that this particular programme was "disappointing". It is alleged that due to one of those interminable squabbles with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), the free choice of songs was limited and Janet Blair who had recently replaced Mary Martin, as regular "chanteuse", ensured that listeners got a least, two turkeys, on Christmas Eve with the inexplicable, "Steam Is On The Beam" (the only song ever written about central heating?) and a decidedly, unmelodious "khaki" cantata, "The Soldier Of Mine".

The Charioteers delivered some true harmony on "Red River Valley" and "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" and John Scott provided a sober arrangement of "The Toy Trumpet" for the Orchestra. Significantly, the number of Bing's vocals hadn't increased at all. Apart from the opening and closing hymns, he participated in only four songs. There is a salute to the Season with 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'; The Music Maids and Hal joined him for 'Why Don't You Fall In Love With Me?' followed by 'Good Morning Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip' and there was a pleasant duet with Miss Blair of another of those songs that he seemed to enjoy singing but never recorded - Cole Porter's 'You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To'.

Bing with Janet Blair on the Kraft Music Hall. Bing's sideburns were necessary for his part in 'Dixie'.

The 'guest list was a trifle skimpy. Oscar winning, Fay Bainter, well-known for her portrayals of furrow-browed but sympathetic matrons, read the doleful 'Letter To Virginia' and there was a conspicuously unfunny Christmas sketch which wasted the talents of most of the 'resident' cast, plus Jack Carson. 'Santa Claus' was played by Andrew Tombes, one of those 'B' feature, character actors whose face you have seen a hundred times but you can't put a name to. He appeared in only one Bing film, as the clean-shaven half of the two 'Royal undertakers' in 'Road To Morocco'. It may be that my remarks will be considered as over-caustic but I must be honest. Although I am still grateful for the preservation of this elderly radio programme in its entirety, much of the script would nowadays have the audience rolling up their sleeves rather than in the aisles.

There was a further opportunity to hear Bing on that same Christmas Eve of fifty-three years ago, when the War Department gave domestic listeners their first taste of a series that had been going out to the Armed Forces on short-wave for 43 consecutive weeks. (It was already required listening in Britain, having been aired on the BBC's Forces Programme since the previous April). The purpose of this occasion, according to a spokesman for the Office of War Information was to forge a link between servicemen abroad and the folks on the Home Front and the subject of this auspicious premiere was Command Performance USA - "the greatest entertainers in America as requested by you, the fighting men and women of America, presented this week and every week until it's over, Over There", a pledge that was kept until long after the war had ended. Command Performance No. 44 was no exception in living up to the commitment. There was an impressive line-up. The Andrews Sisters, Ginny Sims, Ethel Waters and Dinah Shore, all had a song to sing. Spike Jones acknowledged the holiday in inimitable style, with 'Jingle Bells' and the Kay Kyser Orchestra performed their big hit, 'Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition'. Comedy came from Red Skelton, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy with straight man, Charles Laughton plus Jack Benny and Fred Allen, who proved that they hadn't been hired for their vocal prowess, by duetting on 'Friendship'. Here is a quote from a contemporary review of the show, "....Bob Hope tossed off a monologue and cross-fired with Crosby. The special treat, in the vocal department, was a version of 'Basin Street Blues' that came out of the tonsil partnership of Bing Crosby and the Charioteers with the Al Goodman Orchestra". - And few would quibble with this!

Bing did not get involved with the 'wall to wall' style of Yuletide programme that was to become his speciality, until he joined Philco, as is evidenced by his ninth and last Christmas appearance for Kraft. Again, a copy of the complete broadcast of 21st. December 1944 has been preserved. As might be expected, the mandatory 'opener'and 'closer' are used and he delivers the identical arrangement of his hit recording, with the Andrews Sisters, of 'Jingle Bells' but this time accompanied by the Charioteers. Remember, this was to be the last Christmas of the war and the resident vocal group also offered their own version of 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' with 'A Slip Of The Lip (Can Sink A Ship)'. The Kraft Choral Club were on hand with a couple of appropriately, sacred songs but the remaining items were, quite definitely, unseasonable. Eugenie Baird, obliged with a solo of 'I Dream Of You (More Than You Dream I Do)' and Bing had two more songs. There was a nice version of 'I'm Making Believe', Mack Gordon and Jimmy Monaco's Academy Award nominee from 'Sweet And Lowdown', a Fox film whose only other claim to merit was the appearance of Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. The other song was written in 1934 and enjoyed, yet more revivals, in 1960 and 1985. Bing latched onto one of these when he recorded it with Billy May. Although this particular version of 'What A Diff'rence A Day Made' boasted an extra half-chorus, I would venture to suggest that this was not the best of the three renditions that were aired on Kraft or, perhaps, it is just the dubious fidelity of a geriatric taped copy. Be that as it may, the discriminating listener would still have the prospect, three days later, on Christmas Eve, of hearing Bing warble 'White Christmas' accompanied by his old 'governor' Paul Whiteman on the 'Philco Radio Hall Of Fame'.

All that now remains is to wish, everyone, a Merry Christmas and to slightly expand on the philosophy contained in my first paragraph, I will append, that all that one may ask of this life is, enough food to eat, sufficient clothes to wear, a shelter from the elements and eight and a half million pounds.

Lionel Pairpoint

The Variety Tribute

For 12 years, John Marshall has worked diligently to raise funds to finance an advertisement in Variety, the show biz 'bible', highlighting Bing on the anniversary of his death. John had earlier announced that 1995 would be the last time that he ran the appeal and he signs off in his own inimitable way.

One way or another, provide you keep an eye on the obituary page and realise another century has almost shot its bolt, this seems to be a period in history much given to ending eras. Much as it hurt me to recently announce the final entry for the long-running Variety Memorial, the truth has to be told; them kind of days is just about over and it seemed a sensible way to let go.

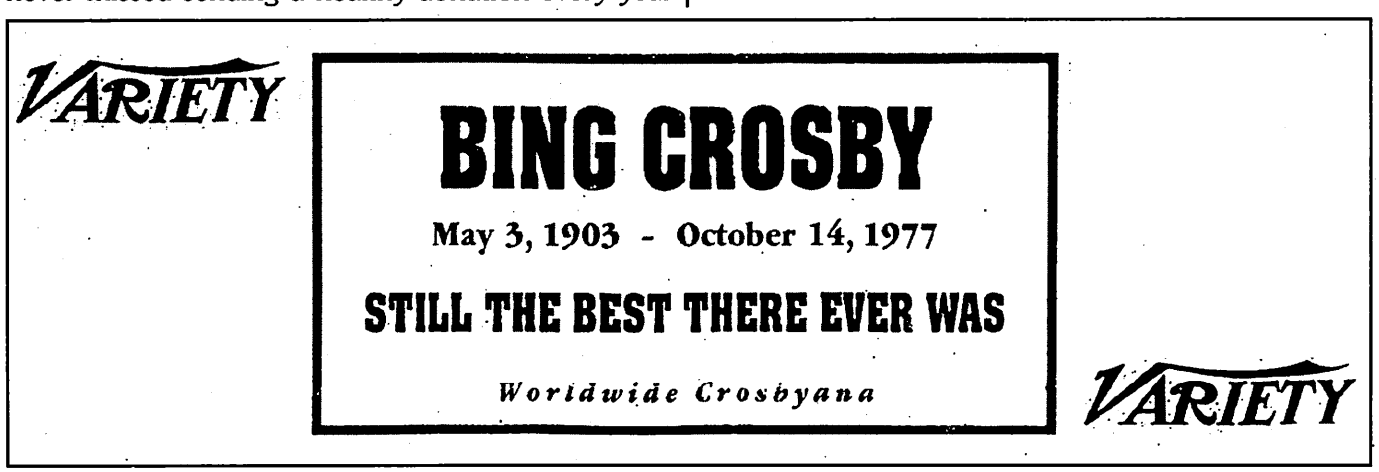
The era business ain't what it used to be when you can become a legend without trying, or indeed without a trace of any discernible talent or, in certain very serious cases, against your own wishes. Bing, at least as long as Alan Dell remained alive, had a regular slot when Black October came around again but here you have the perfect illustrated guide to era burn-out. Everything has to end, sooner or later, as Alan proved. Phil Harris too, in a strictly friends-of-Bing sense or in the wider sense that there are few left we can consider as likely to tweak the FOR button, next time the AGAINSTS meet up. For a dozen years, this attempt at keeping Bing in a show business publication of repute proved a number of things - or it did to me. Reg Bristo went on record as finding the idea preposterous or to the extreme left of looney on the basis that Crosbyana simply couldn't, shouldn't or wouldn't come up with the kind of money a campaign of this kind required. Despite this, having it proved to be otherwise, he never missed sending a healthy donation every year until he died, but proof arrived at this address soon after its inauguration, I never did have time to feel maybe I'd been barking up the wrong club. Okay, so it can bring you into contact with all sorts, but take it from me, many an unknown fan of the Man is worth his or her weight in purest gold - AND blue!

So an era is ending, yet here's this one small project notching up £350 on a bad year. Maybe the stuff grows on trees after all and ye need only ask and ye will be tripping over bundles of it! Far from it and in my own case I may reasonably claim an hour or two alongside twin VCRs. The same videos are available elsewhere but I take considerable pride in reminding you if your reel came from this address, it can be shown anywhere. Over and above what I believe was a fair shake, there's a select handful who invariably took a large and encouraging step further. Without them, this went nowhere. I've told them often enough and it gives me pleasure to do so again. My hanging up my saddle comes with mixed feelings, especially when something like this is probably needed now more than it ever has been.

If you were involved in creating this space in Variety each year you know quite a lot about that very subject, and I thank you for it - most sincerely.

John Marshall

(Editor: Thanks for everything John, we shall miss your efforts. Secretary / Treasurer Michael Crampton is hopeful that the funds will allow the ICC to place an advert next year but if there is anyone out there who wants to take on John's role, please contact Michael. This year's advert is shown below.)



Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

"Summertime, and the living is easy.." It has been almost twenty years since we in Britain experienced such a continuous period of long, hot days and balmy nights. Sun, sea and sand, bikini belles and fun on the beach peculiar to the British at play whenever the temperatures soar and the waves roll in to demolish fragile sandcastles and flood their moats with surf, crabs and seawrack. The twilight of eventide and the 'nineteenth hole' beckoning ardent fans of the fairway. Bing loved these long, midsummer evenings peculiar to the United Kingdom, or, indeed, anywhere on a similar parallel. But Britain had the golf courses to go with them. How very strange then, that on the first day of August, at four o'clock in the afternoon and with temperatures in the 'nineties', a film that was described in the 'Satellite Times' as "The all-time seasonal classic." WHITE CHRISTMAS! Perhaps it was intended to cool us down a little. Or was it just tongue in cheek? Some programme planner's perverted sense of humour. One may say that Bing in anything can be watched with enjoyment at any time, and while this is basically true I have to say that this particular film, whether screened or from video, is one of my little Christmas treats not to be missed and special only to that Yuletide occasion. On a hot, summer afternoon I just can't seem to experience the feel good factor that always comes over me whilst watching Bing and Rosie, Danny and Vera-Ellen singing "Snow" at the right time and in the right place. There among the holly and the mistletoe; and the greetings cards from family and friends decorated with their Santas, robins and candles. My home at Christmastime. However, one week later Sky Movies Gold were more seasonally adjusted by the screening of ROAD TO BALI, and though I swear it was hotter here at least we didn't have to contend with gargantuan squids, volcanic eruptions and a disembodied Errol Flynn! It really is about time that this sixth entry in the series of classic comedies was on world-wide release in all formats. The remainder of the summer films shown in these Isles were very acceptable, though very thin on the ground. But, as a perusal of the following list will reveal, they included one little gem that I bet we all missed!

WHITE CHRISTMAS (August 1st)	SKY MOVIES GOLD
HIGH TIME (Aug. 2, Nov. 9 & 21)	SKY MOVIES GOLD SKY MOVIES
ROAD TO BALI (Aug. 8th & Oct. 27)	SKY MOVIES GOLD
LITTLE BOY LOST (August 22nd & 31st)	THE MOVIE CHANNEL
STAR NIGHT AT THE COCOANUT GROVE (August 23rd)	TNT
ROAD TO UTOPIA (September 8th)	BBC2
ROAD TO RIO (October 23)	SKY MOVIES GOLD
SON OF PALEFACE (October 24th)	SKY MOVIES GOLD
LET'S MAKE LOVE (October 26th)	SKY MOVIES GOLD
MR. MUSIC (November 2nd.)	SKY MOVIES GOLD

There are no prizes offered for guessing that STAR NIGHT AT THE COCOANUT GROVE is the little gem referred to. One of our respected members, Lionel Pairpoint, was trawling through the satellite channels and came across the film just as Mary Pickford was saying thanks to Bing at the conclusion of his song, "With Every Breath I Take", thus missing the opportunity to record the film.

However, all may not be lost, for TNT repeat their film screenings, as readers of this column will be well aware. The only problem is that the film shorts are not previously programmed in advance enough for the information to be published in print. Therefore it is necessary to check each night on TNT Screen Text to find out what shorts are to be shown throughout each evening and through the night. These announcements are to be found on their Text Page number 411. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this a further screening will have occurred.

(Editor: The film was shown again on November 11)

Bing with Johnny Mack Brown and Mary Pickford in 'Star Night At The Cocoanut Grove'

Good old BBC for continuing to present the Road movies at regular intervals. It must be over twenty years since I last did quite an extensive write-up of UTOPIA for BING and between times my enthusiasm for the trio's fourth excursion into yet another geographically exotic extravaganza has not waned one jot. There are many favourite moments, including the farewell scene at San Francisco pier, Benchley's interpolations, the dog and the dynamite, "Welcome To My Dreams" and just when we'd forgotten this was a flashback film and Bing, in the penultimate scene, was stranded in a very serious situation, the final, hilarious denouement! Whilst we now have this film available on fairly recent release it is good to know that some fifty years after their production the various powers that be recognise the Road series as being consistently entertaining. Who knows, fifty years into the future, on some distant planet maybe, they'll still be lapping them up!

Concluding the visuals for this time is a comment culled from the DAILY EXPRESS of the 1st September wherein Rachel Simpson, the paper's films reviewer, writes; 'every now and then, a film comes along which makes you feel good to be alive. Whether it's Bing and Grace falling tunefully in love in HIGH SOCIETY, or Jimmy Stewart in IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, it sends you out of the cinema with a spring in your step, and a grin on your face.' The movie to which she is referring is WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING and, having seen it, I would agree that it certainly comes into the 'feel good' category. Nice to know that current reviewers still recognise the very special merits of many of the older films and the stars that made them so special!

Bing on the wireless

In response to my request in the August issue of BING for news of what Bing tracks are being played on the wireless in your region I had a very nice letter from 21 year old David E. Lobosco of Glenshaw, Pennsylvania in which he states: 'The only Bing Crosby song we ever hear (on our 'easy listening' station) is "True Love", and that is only once every four months!' That's pretty appalling when one considers this is the country of Bing's birth. Happily, we fare a great deal better in the U.K. and, happily for David, he has been receiving recorded tapes of excerpts from British programmes, noting with sadness the demise of Alan Dell, and the axing of Paul Barnes. Now, too, comes the great loss of Trevor Littlechild (an obituary appears elsewhere in this issue). But we can assure David that the many enthusiastic Crosbyphiles in the British Isles will continue to actively support the Crosby cause and, with the immeasurable help of Ernest Sutkowski who keeps our programme presenters supplied with the latest releases on CD, Bing's music will live on. David's letter concludes: '..... your article inspired me to write to you and let you know that there are young people who love Bing Crosby, and I always will strive to keep his music and memory alive!' It is very gratifying to know that Bing WILL survive when the generation to which I belong has long gone.

Also through the post came a letter from long time member Dick Lillico who, incidentally, down the years, has been known to carry a tune pretty well himself. Dick wrote to the Heritage Secretary expressing his concern at the BBC's ageist policy. In a reply Thomas Barry, of the Broadcasting Policy Division, answering on behalf of the Secretary of State, wrote: '... the BBC must provide a properly balanced service, broadcasting a wide range of programmes. Under the terms of its Royal Charter and Agreement, the BBC is responsible for decisions about the editorial content and scheduling of programmes ... The Government believes it is important, however, that the broadcasters are responsive to viewers' and listeners' concerns.'; and goes on to suggest that Dick should raise his concerns with the BBC by writing to them direct at Broadcasting House. This he has done and awaits their response. There is no doubt that without listener pressure the so-called 'easy listening' programme will, inevitably, be relegated to the realms of the dodo.

Barnesy's back

The good news though is that Paul Barnes is to return to BBC Norfolk on a daily basis between 7 pm and 9 pm. in November and he will also be picked up by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire in January. Welcome back, Barnesy! Meantime, his former two hours each evening slot is still being hosted by Keith Skues. Initially, Keith was very definitely caught in the 'Best of Bing' net; but I'm pleased to report that he has escaped from that confine in recent weeks and now plays a much greater variety of Crosbyana. Moreover, his 'Skuesograph' has shown that Bing is very popular in the Eastern Counties, coming a regular third to Daniel O'Donnell and Matt Monro. His what!? I hear you ask. Yes, well; it is a listener involvement popularity poll wherein followers of his programme are invited to state, among other things, their three most popular songs and singers. By collating the answers, points are awarded so that winners in each category emerge. Since its commencement Bing has climbed up through the ratings leaving many of the most well known artistes in his wake till eventually displacing Elvis for third place, where he has remained for quite a while now. Considering that Skues plays quite a lot of material from the days when the metamorphosis from popular music to 'pop', including 'rock and roll', was taking place, it can be seen that Bing's holding up well on this much broader canvas of light entertainment. Another gimmick that Keith employs is to play a record backwards and invite listeners to 'phone in with their guesses as to who was involved. One such was Bing's "Sweet Georgia Brown". 'Jolson' was a first suggestion but, by chance, a Mr Brown correctly guessed Bing and we were all rewarded by a reversal of the turntable that presented our jazzin' Bing Crosby heading off in the right direction. As with most of the record presenters, Skues has been the lucky recipient of CDs courtesy of Ernie Sutkowski so he now has the opportunity to enhance his programme with such diversity as the sketches from 'Hollywood Guys And Dolls'; songs from 'Bing 'N' Basie' and the greater pleasantries to be found with the likes of "Younger Than Springtime"; "Man On Fire"; "Harbour Lights", and the charming Burke and Van Heusen number "Sunday, Monday Or Always". So far, the only vintage tracks have been the aforementioned Bing backwards track and "Dinah" - but give it time!

It seems sadly ironic that the first track played by the late Trevor Littlechild in the period under review was "The Big Movie Show In The Sky", the lyric of which is so prophetically applicable. Trevor was a real enthusiast and researcher of the cinema and stage musicals and presented all this information in such an interesting manner. He would link the artistes and songs, one leading to another, in what one might call lateral thinking dialogue that was always informative but never dull. He was never unkind, and any criticism was gently directed without stooping to heavy sarcasm. Before his death he recorded several programmes up ahead so, as I write, he can still be heard on BBC Radio Cambs. Saturday nights in his TIME WAS programme. For his consistent and innovative referral to the whole spectrum of recorded Crosbyana, which includes his relatively recent playing of the Bing and Judy Garland radio track "Give Me Something To Remember You By", Trevor is the posthumous recipient of my 'Not The Best Of Bing Award' this time around.

Commencing the beginning of October, John Gunn's '78 Vintage' was moved again, this time to 8.00 pm on Saturday evenings, BBC Essex - though it is picked up as far afield as Holland. Bing retains his Crosby Corner at around twenty past the hour and the tracks played are almost always listener requests or in response to some gentle persuasion by the Crosby gurus of Essex; whose numbers have increased this year by the welcome arrival of Dennis and Jean Saville up from London to now reside in Leigh-on-Sea. An estuary town only the spin of a couple of Bing 78s from John's broadcasting headquarters. Where John scores over most other presenters is in the preponderance of 'Thirties' Bing that he features. Many requests start 'I used to own ...', a typical example being "One More Time"; one of number of vintage shellac that also included "She Reminds Me Of You"; "Home On The Range"; "Love In Bloom" - 'A true Crosby classic', remarked John - and the slightly later "Trade Winds", popular with Battle of Britain pilots whilst waiting for the scramble siren; and on through duets with Patty Andrews, Rosemary Clooney and Fred Astaire among the sixteen or so recordings noted in the last four months. The last programme listened to before attending this round-up was on 14th October, the eighteenth anniversary of Bing's death. Wally Oldfield requested "I'm Making Believe" from the The Boss's WILD ABOUT HARRY CD, especially for regular listener June Polly to mark this occasion - a remembrance weekend registered by most of the proper music programme presenters. Of course, a lot of prompting was undertaken by the usual stalwarts. Leslie Gaylor had three tracks played on Mo Dutta's Early Morning Show on Radio 2; a nicely balanced selection comprising "Can't We Talk It Over", "Road To Morocco" and "Now You Had Jazz". Stan White triumphed over Benny Green's Sinatra infatuation with "Gentle On My Mind", and also by advising Bill Rennells on the latter's Melody Hour (Radio Oxford) of the significance of the Saturday date: a ploy which not only had Rennells

featuring "Play A Simple Melody", "Anything You Can Do" and "Gal In Calico" on his programme of 13th but also had him make Bing 'Star Of The Week' through his ensuing broadcasts. Also doing the honours on behalf of Crosbyphiles everywhere was Norman Carter. Among others contacted was Keith Skues, who mentioned Norman, and played "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?" David Jacobs marked the event with "My Prayer", and Peter 'Dr Swing' Moreton tied in Bing's name and the special date by playing the excellent "Daughter Of Molly Malone" in his 'Vocalists With Big Bands' programme. The only so-called 'best of Bing' track to mark the occasion was "Swinging On A Star" featured by Mandy Moreton standing in for Richard Spendlove, who is on holiday in the States at present.

Was it really 'Juke Box Jury' that David Jacobs used to host? He's certainly changed in his musical appreciation since those early days of 'pop' - though let us not forget that Bing 45s could be played on those chromium plated, dalek-like forerunners of the demonic disco dispensers! Before the premature departure of Alan Dell, David said on 'Sounds Easy' that Alan's 'Crosby Corner' was an inspired idea; "Next time I see him (Alan) I'll ask him if it was just his love of the man's work, his vast popularity or, perhaps, Alan's own personal relationship with Bing?" Did he get around to asking those questions before Alan died I wonder? Whether or no, David was later to say "I've become a huge fan of Mr Crosby all over again." Many of his selections are from the 'Treasury' albums wherein Bing added his voice to the Geoff 'Mishel Piastro' Love pre-recorded tracks. During this late-Sixties period Bing was a little out of touch, not only with the orchestra but also because he had not been singing so much; and practice makes perfect, as Bing was to say on more than one occasion. The general listening public may not be so aware of the noticeable difference between the Treasury tracks and, say, the definitive versions of "Incurably Romantic", "The Second Time Around" and tracks elevated to the Buddy Cole - Pete Moore albums which Mr Jacobs also played. But credit where credit is due, and D.J.'s Crosby Corner, courtesy of the late Alan Dell, is an established Sunday event which, along with many others, keeps Bing's name and talent well to the forefront of popular music. Long may that be happily true.

Bert Bishop

A 1944 Christmas Wish Comes True

Margaret Exton tells how a wish came true for her thanks to an American airman.

On Boxing Day 1944, Gil Jarvela landed at Valley on Anglesey and en route to Norfolk, he and his navigator came into Stone in Staffordshire for the evening. They went into a local dance and on asking a young lady to dance, Gil enquired where he could get a cold beer. She took them to the home of her Uncle Jack Jordan and while they were chatting, they heard 10 year old Margaret calling from upstairs, "Who's there Daddy?"

"Oh, just a couple of Yanks" Jack replied and he went on to explain how Margaret was almost bedridden with a serious bone disease. He invited them to go upstairs to see her and Gil was saddened to find her flat on her back. The first thing that entered his mind was to ask her if she was happy with what Santa had brought her but she was very disappointed because she had not received the record she had asked for by her favourite crooner - Bing's record of 'Don't Fence Me In.' (Jack quietly told Gil that he had tried everywhere but with it being wartime, it was impossible to get the record.)

Gil told Margaret to 'keep the faith' and she would receive the record. A couple of months went by and then Margaret received a package from the USA. She was surprised and delighted to find inside the record of 'Don't Fence Me In' plus 2 other records and also a personally signed photo from Bing. This led Margaret to deduce that the American who had called at Christmas must know Bing and had arranged this surprise. But what had actually happened when Gil reached his base in Horum, Norfolk was that he had written home to his wife Bonnie in Portland, Oregon and told her about Margaret's disappointment. He asked her to get the record and send it to him and he would post it to Margaret. Bonnie was also unable to find the record, so she posted the letter on to her Aunt in Los Angeles hoping she would get it. The Aunt in turn passed it on to a friend who was Secretary to the singer / actress Betty Hutton and Betty placed it into the hands of Bing. Gil Jarvela knew nothing of what had happened to his letter so he was greatly surprised one morning while lying in his bunk when his First Sergeant delivered his mail to him (which was in itself most unusual). When he asked what the special occasion was, the reply given was "You've got a letter from Bing Crosby." Bing had written to say that he had seen Gil's letter and was sending records and a photo to Margaret.

Well, Gil continued to get with the war and he flew 26 missions over Germany. He returned home, moved to Alaska where he became a bush pilot for 22 years. On his retirement, he moved to Olympia in Washington State (Crosby land). He often thought of Margaret and after many years resumed contact and corresponded mainly at Christmas time. He learned that Margaret coped with her disability, had married and had 2 daughters and a son.

In August, 1986, after over 40 years from the first meeting, Margaret and her son Richard travelled to Olympia to meet again her special airman and his wife Bonnie. It was a dream come true and they had a wonderful time seeing and visiting some wonderful sights and reminiscing about that Christmas long ago when the kind actions of Gil and Bonnie brought a lifetime of happiness and lifelong friendship. Margaret also realised that Gil had not really known Bing as she had thought.

Bing's photo has always had pride of place in my home and I shall continue to treasure it. He was and always will be my favourite crooner.

Margaret Exton (nee Jordan)

(Editor: What a nice story. I am constantly amazed at the kindness and thoughtfulness of people and Gil Jarvela deserves a medal for the trouble he took in the middle of the war.)

The Making of the Legend

In the last edition of Bing, we mentioned Bing's personal appearance tour in 1932 and we promised further details in due course. In August, Ron Bosley, Lionel Pairpoint and myself spent two long but enjoyable days in the newspaper section of the British library in Colindale, London researching old copies of the American Variety magazine. We expanded our knowledge of Bing's career quite considerably and using the information collected, I can now fill in some of the details of Bing's activities as he became well-known as a solo entertainer.

By way of background, you will all recall how Bing and the Rhythm Boys walked out of the Hotel Ambassador's Cocoanut Grove mid way through 1931. Bing made three more shorts for Mack Sennett (to follow his first effort 'I Surrender Dear') and then he managed to attract the attention of Bill Paley of CBS. He went to New York and signed a contract to appear nightly on CBS on a sustaining basis pending a sponsor being found. The story of his failure to appear on the first two nights scheduled for his broadcasts is well known and eventually he made his debut on September 2nd. broadcasting from Station WABC in New York. Variety magazine of October 13, 1931 carries a report (shown opposite) on one of these early sustaining shows and this contains some interesting comments which will be new to many of us. Bing duly found a sponsor and this was Cremo Cigars and he began as 'The Cremo Singer' on Tuesday, November, 3, 1931, broadcasting 6 nights per week for CBS from Station WABC in New York. The Cremo show was presented twice each night, once at 7 or 7.15 p.m. for the East Coast audience and later at 11 p.m. for the West Coast listeners (where it would only be 8 p.m.). Bing was obviously developing steadily and he got some very nice exposure in Variety of November 10. First of all there was a review of his first Sennett short 'I Surrender Dear'. Some of the phrases used in the review were:

> *Good two reeler extolling the vocal virtues of Bing Crosby suitably mixed up with laughs.....They'll like it all over and a standout amongst shorts. Where Crosby has attained traceable ether popularity should also have box office value.*

This is a rave review in Variety terms and a few pages further on we find a review of the show at the Paramount Theatre, New York on November 7. Bing had opened there on November 3 and here's an extract:

> *Crosby (New Acts) is on the stage twice and a third time sings off-stage as accompanist for a stage production. There's no chance for anyone ever to forget that he's the big man this week. Not a bad method, either, especially when the central figure stands up under the plugging strain. Crosby does.*

The show alternated throughout the day with the film of the week which was 'Once a Lady' starring Ruth Chatterton. The review continued.

RADIO REPORTS

BING CROSBY
Songs
Sustaining
WABC

Having been on the air around New York for two or three weeks, Publix thinks enough of Crosby to book him into the New York Paramount while RKO turned him down on the theory he isn't yet well enough known around this area to draw sufficiently to offset the salary he's asking. Both may be right. Singer is due at the Publix Times Square spot Oct. 31.

When Crosby first came to town WABC had him warbling around 10:30 or 11 at night. This hour was soon discarded for the more important period of 7 p.m. He follows in Mort Downey, also CBS, and Russ Colombo, NBC, between which two Crosby is mostly compared with the latter because both are baritones.

Getting an earful of Crosby over a series of programs doesn't leave much doubt that he's not entirely at ease when delivering an unfamiliar song. In other words, it sounds as though Crosby is best with established tunes which he has been able to study and work out for his style of delivery. This may mean he's at the mercy of the song publishers because of being on nightly and using up three or four songs a period.

Crosby's best interpretation of a tune calls for special orchestrating and high grade variation of the melody of which his voice is capable. He's best with hot strings behind him although either Crosby or the studio evidently doesn't think so because he's changed orchestras during his WABC sojourn.

If Crosby hasn't his own arranger, he should get one and stay three or four programs ahead all the time. Getting hold of a tune and being able to give it what he's got, under the guidance of a note specialist, ought to make him a cinch for a commercial. As currently routining it often sounds as if he were vocally fighting the songs of which he's uncertain, thereby being forced to sing them straight and classing as just average when so limited.

Crosby was one third of Whiteman's Rhythm Boys a few years ago. He since came to prominence on the solo and ensemble attention through his phonograph recordings. If he can work out a schedule allowing him the same preparation for radio as for recording he's a cinch for other possibilities despite his whistling which is open to debate because of following Dowdy with it. Sid.

Stage show opens and closes on Crosby as the center of the picture. Starter is an interior set lighted from the rear for silhouette effect. Crosby is singing to a girl. When the traveler closes Crosby steps up to the apron for the customary 'I'm glad to be here' hoke. His second song is delivered while seated on the rising organ, played by Mrs. Crawford. He steps back to the apron for the third vocal, this bringing the show into full stage and the first girl number...

His (Bing's) stuff is carried through a mike wherever he stands, making it seem the stage is flooded with microphones. Two are in the open.

The reference to 'New Acts' refers to a separate section in Variety where new acts are examined in depth. So again in that November 10 issue there is another feature on Bing and we reproduce this in its entirety.

Tuesday

NEW ACTS

BING CROSBY
Songs
Paramount, N. Y.

Bing Crosby is the leader among the current flock of popular song baritones on the radio. And the first to be recognized as possessing sufficient importance to rate stage headlining. Crosby in about two months on the New York air for CBS has met with some popularity. His disc rep preceded him east. He might mean enough now to bring some money into the Paramount, though not enough to make the entertainment angle secondary.

That Crosby still entertains more than he draws keeps him out of the freak headliner class. He's as pleasant to hear on a stage as on the radio, for at the large Paramount they rigged up a stageful of microphones for him.

Crosby isn't a novice on a stage, another advantage for him over the average radio name crashing the theatre. He saw an audience before he saw the inside of a radio studio, so he must know audiences. When with Whiteman's Rhythm Boys he struck a battered cymbal for emphasis with a drumstick and made a noise like a goose.

Crosby is also at home in a tux, and fronts okay. At the Paramount, in a presentation constructed around him, he sings five numbers, two in person and one offstage as accompaniment for a ballet. He didn't register in the wallop way with this picture house audience, but they liked him enough to qualify the booking.

The baricrooner is booked for an indef run between the New York and Brooklyn Pars. *Bige.*

Every week Bing's show at the Paramount was reviewed and space prevents from reproducing all of these. However here are a few extracts.

November 27th.

...Kate Smith being brought in this week to the support of Bing Crosby, whose fifth week finds his novelty waning, even if the charm of his crooning is unimpaired.....The Crosby routine undergoes weekly changes and revisions, wise handling for a run feature. This week he does his torch song and another, then going into a crossfire session with a trim flap falling for the dumbbell line. But it's the tear-stained ballad that turns the trick for this radio ace.

December 4

Important items over here this week seem to be that they've made an ordinary baton-waving m.c. out of Bing Crosby....You can't call Crosby a colorless m.c. Not with that baritone and flair for handling flip dialogue. But the faster he can get

away from swinging that right arm in front of a bunch of musicians the better for the former rhythm of the Three Rhythm Boys A case of a lad coming in from the coast, developing almost overnight on the air - then Publix makes an m.c. out of him. Too many of the type have been around and it amounts to a perch at the top of a high-speed stage toboggan unless nipped and quickly. As a matter of fact, if Crosby cares to pay some attention to that waistline he may not always be spending his time between a microphone and the film and vaude houses. Flashes of the way he handles patter are the spark to the idea that this youngster is promising legit juvenile material.....Crosby, anyway, is already a candidate for a revue, and that he can be developed into a light comedian who can carry love interest for a book show is plausible from what he's showing over here.

If anyone happens to think this is an out-and-out plug for Crosby such is not the intent, especially for a guy who can break 85. Rather it is an attempt to show what can and may happen to a youth with prospects, and possibly to serve as a tip to the youngsters who will come after Crosby. Followers built up by the Bing over the air won't relish seeing him introducing acts and leading the applause.....In other words, Crosby should figure on presenting himself as a specialist for his own good...

Well, some thoughtful and sincere comments from the reviewer. Bing continued his weekly stints at the Paramount and in the December 22 edition of Variety there was a favourable review of his second Sennett short 'One More Chance' containing the following:

> *New subject is first rate, Crosby revealing a splendid camera presence, remarkable to those who have seen his mild personal appearances on the Paramount (New York) stage....Crosby displays a capital comedy sense, plays with assurance and certainty. Subject is worth minor featuring in lieu of the air popularity.... Short a solid click with the premiere crowd.*

The moving platform which Bing often described in later years starts to make an appearance in the reviews of Bing's stage performances and the review of the show on January 2, 1932 is apposite..

> *....This time they've concentrated on Bing Crosby himself, with a neat introduction, the singer appearing on an entirely dark stage, standing on what is apparently a 'boom' which moves him about from side to side and up and down as he sings his characteristic torches into the mike, which follows along at his elbow. Only the singer's face is visible.....*

The reviews were generally favourable to Bing but clearly there was a feeling that Bing was not being presented as well as possible. Note the review of the January 8th. show.

> *Crosby is again hooked in for appearance with a turn that has appeared earlier, this time working with Frances Faye, returning as his accompanist after opening the show solo....He uses a bit of comedy repartee for a change of pace from straight crooning, but his cold entrance and his finish, which amounts to an m.c. announcement of the St.. Denis interlude, do little to help him. The crooner hasn't been well handled throughout his stay at the Paramount, but he seems to have made friends among the regulars.*

He certainly was making some friends and the review of the January 15th. show brought good news.

> *...Crosby has been here for some time now. Under a new contract just signed, he's to stand by another 10 weeks at a reported jump in salary to $4000.....Crosby, who tails the Jesse Crawford organ recital, with a bit over the mike, has the mike in his hat for one number in the full stage scene. Later a standing amplification receiver is brought on. At first his voice comes over hoarsely, but later it's okay.*

The following week there were criticisms of Bing's dress sense:

> *...into which strolls the Crosby arrayed in grey trousers, blue coat and shirt, red tie and a stiff straw hat. You figure it out if it's Crosby or the other half of Laurel and Hardy.*

But then we had a more in depth look at Bing in the show on January 29.

> *Bing Crosby in the stage show at the Paramount again this week (his steenth) continues to prove he can take it. In one spot the radio crooner sits at his mike in the center of the stage and croons modestly, or doesn't croon at all, while a group of dancing girls entirely obscure him from the audience. Only excuse for the girls being on*

the stage at all is Crosby's number, 'Cuban Love Song,' and the case is unique as representing a 'name' attraction being in complete ambush behind a row of prancing coryphees.

Later on in the entertainment Crosby, together with Sid Silvers, works with Lilyan Tashman, and it's constantly an issue whether it's Bing or Silvers who is functioning as general stooge for the turn. Whatever the case may be, Crosby doing a quiet line of clowning here shows up well enough as the impudent reporter, even if they do dress him up like a racetrack tout. Maybe the crooner takes it out in kind - his subjection to unimportance, that is - for a chance to work in a plug for his Cremo hour on CBS. Anyhow, he slips in the plug with great distinctiveness and eclat. Maybe that makes it even for what this house has done to muffle his personality.

At the end of his performance on February 10th., Bing closed at the New York Paramount after 14 weeks. He immediately opened at the Brooklyn Paramount on February 11 and I was able to spot a review of that first week's performance. I have seen adverts from the New York Times billing Bing's subsequent appearances at the Brooklyn Paramount for the next 5 weeks but no mention of the performances could be found in Variety. The Brooklyn shows were reviewed each week in Variety but there was no mention of Bing. We must remember that this was when he had the Cremo radio show twice nightly as well, he was making records and night-clubbing intensively and I wonder if this was when his nodes started to trouble him. Did he have to pull out of the Brooklyn shows frequently because of his voice problems and as a result the Variety reviewer missed him? He was also involved in a contract dispute with Roger Marchetti at that time and Variety mentions this in the March 22nd. edition. It seems that Marchetti (who was based on the West Coast) was taking 20% of Bing's income. Bing clearly felt this was too much as Marchetti was not doing much for him in New York. A settlement was soon reached with Bing paying $40K to obtain his freedom from the contract.

The Cremo show finished on February 27th. although it was advertised to take place the following week. Again I wonder if the nodes were the reason. The following week Bing reverted to three appearances a week on CBS broadcasting initially at 6.30 pm. Possibly there was a later show as well for the West Coast. I assume that these shows were on a sustaining basis again. Until referring to the New York Times of those days, I had no knowledge of the shows after the Cremo series finished and before the 'Music That Satisfies' programmes began. Anyone who can supply information, please contact me.

Bing returned to the New York Paramount after 6 weeks ostensibly at the Brooklyn outlet on March 25th. The review of that March 25th. show again had some nice comments about Bing.

Those countless microphone users in vaudeville at present could take a tip from Crosby on the use of that instrument. Instead of standing the mike on the stage and hiding behind it while singing, Crosby has it planted in the pit several feet in front of him, and in that way the audience can see Crosby as well as hear him..... Crosby as a gendarme shows a flair for comedy that has cropped up in his shorts, but not up to now on the stage.

Bing was clearly developing as an all-round entertainer and this trend is shown to be continuing in the show on April 1st.

Billing goes equally for Crosby and Miss Wong, but the stage treatment of the two is vastly different. Crosby continues to get the production works. This has been going on so long now, it is taken as a matter of course that the radio crooner will be kicked around. Frame-up this week puts him in the capacity of a stooge for O'Keefe in a rough-and-tumble comedy session to which Miss Wong plays straight, and the two men in grotesque Chinese costumes do rowdy knockabout.....Crosby comes down front to the mike for three numbers, 'Lovers No More,' Human Thing to Do' and Auf Wiedersehn.' This was the best appearance he has made so far, because they left him alone to manage his appearance in the simplest manner possible.

'Miss Wong' was Anna May Wong. Bing's singing and his use of the microphone kept attracting comment as evidenced by the review of the April 8th show.

The Crosby influence with the mikes must have had an unostentatious P.A. system planted all over the stage, as everything reached across the foots into the balcony. Crosby clicked with three numbers. 'My Woman' being produced for flash effect and getting it.

Bing left the Paramount in New York on April 14th. and went off on a personal appearance tour on his way to Hollywood where he was to star in a film of a stage show called 'Wild Waves' as a radio crooner. The film was later renamed 'The Big Broadcast.' His tour took him to the following venues.

1932
April 15-21 Detroit
April 22-28 The Oriental in Chicago
April 29 - May 5 Buffalo
May 6 -12 Metropolitan, Boston
May 13-19 New Haven
May 20-26 The Oriental in Chicago again
May 27 - June 2 Minneapolis
June 3-9 St. Louis

We have seen some of the reviews and I particularly liked that of the Detroit show on April 18th.

> *...Bing Crosby is also doing himself no harm as working here. A little improvement in the songs used will help his act a little. He carries a guitar player and musical director who doubles at the piano. Guitar player could be dispensed with very easily. Crosby takes a couple of songs to get warmed, but when he started using his personality he was over for the best sock any personal appearance has made here all season.....Bing Crosby on next and stopped the show after three numbers, and came back for one more. Doing 13 minutes, he could have stayed as long as he wanted in a long show.*

Good for Bing but poor Eddie Lang! During his tour Bing kept up his radio shows for CBS via a pick-up from a convenient local radio station but these were now only twice a week (Mondays and Wednesdays).

Bing arrived in Hollywood in June and made his final two shorts for Sennett ('Sing, Bing, Sing' and 'Blue Of The Night') and a Paramount short 'Hollywood On Parade' before making 'The Big Broadcast'. Variety of July 5th. carried a report about Guy Lombardo pulling out of the film because it was planned that Bing would be billed above him. Perhaps that incident influenced Bing's attitude to billing in the future. Bing's contract with CBS expired on July 15th. and difficulties over terms led Bing to pull out of a scheduled radio show on July 18th. just one hour before the programme was due to air.

After a holiday cruising off the Mexican coast, Bing returned to the stage in San Francisco on September 9th. as described in BING 110. He went on to

Bing arrives back in Hollywood.

appear in Oakland and Los Angeles before going to New York in October. He changed agents from Paramount-Publix to Mills-Rockwell and he undertook a week's engagement for $3500 at the Carmen Theatre in Philadelphia starting on November 25th. before arriving at the Capitol Theatre, New York on December 2nd., 1932 for another week of appearances. Second on the bill behind Bing at the Capitol was Bob Hope and that's another story!

In November, 1932 Bing signed a contract to appear on a radio show for Chesterfield Cigarettes called 'Music That Satisfies' commencing on January 4th., 1933. The contract called for 2 appearances a week and the weekly salary was $2000. Bing may have made some other personal appearances around New York early in 1933 and details will be given when we have carried out further research.

Bing was having tremendous success in the USA on stage, on film and radio and particularly with his records. Every month Variety had a review of the best selling records in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago for each record company. Bing was invariably well placed in the Brunswick charts, often with several entries in the top six.

Bing Sells Woodbury Soap

After completing his contract with Chesterfield, Bing made three films 'College Humor', 'Too Much Harmony' and 'Going Hollywood' during 1933 before signing to do a radio series for Woodbury. The following extract from Billboard magazine about his first show for Woodbury was culled from the book 'American Entertainment' by Joseph Csida and June Bundy Csida (published by Watson-Guptill Publications in 1978).

FROM OCT. 28, 1933 ISSUE

Reviewed Monday 8.30 - 9 pm. Style - Baritone and Orchestra. Sponsor - John H. Woodbury, Inc. Station - WABC (CBS network).

Selling a product to the women must of necessity use a program of definite appeal to them, and in Crosby, Woodbury Soap has chosen wisely. For Bing is in the midst of a brilliant career and the motion picture successes in which he appears add to his strength as a radio draw. Further, he has not been heard too often of late and his performance is better than ever as to both voice and choice of selections. On this particular program he neither whistled nor dabbled in his famous impromptu obligatos. Lennie Hayton, an able accompanist, arranger and conductor, has always shown a distinctive style about his work, and Crosby, thru past association, naturally feels at home when Hayton wields the baton or is at the piano. All of which makes for efficiency.

With Crosby and Hayton is a chorus of mixed voices that comes in occasionally, while a good piece of showmanship was a solo by a feminine vocalist about the middle of the program which seemed to offer the precise bit of relief and contrast. Hayton also injected some piano parts played by himself for further diversity of the musical end of the half hour. Crosby himself offered an excellent selection of ballads, mostly of the romantic type, and closed with 'The Last Round-up' for good measure. Orchestral interludes were well done, smooth and soft, plus plenty of rhythm. Show originated on the coast, where Crosby, of course, is making pictures. Credits, done against a partly faded out musical background with the theme 'Beautiful Lady', leaned toward the lower price of the product and its value as a complexion requisite. These were not overdone considering the background of Woodbury, which was used by many grandmothers of today when they were girls.

This review of Bing's first Woodbury show usefully supplements the listing included in BING 97. The 'feminine vocalist' was Mary Lou Raymond. Bing sang 'Thanks' and 'Tomorrow' in addition to 'The Last Round-up'.

For 2 years, Bing had been gradually inserting himself into the public's subconscious and the legend was well and truly beginning to take shape.

Finally, to complete our 'thirties' focus, Neil Robinson came across the following article by Bing in the November 1934 edition of a magazine called 'Picture Play'. The article had been hand-written by Bing himself as the magazine included a photograph of Bing's original draft. The use of words is unmistakably Bing's style as well. I would guess that the article had been written early in 1934 as Bing does not mention the twins who arrived on July 13, 1934. On reading the article, I was struck by the faults Bing attributes to himself which years later were exaggerated and 'exposed' in the notorious 'Hollow Man' book. Bing obviously knew his strengths and weaknesses fairly well.

Malcolm Macfarlane

"ME!"

The crooner king looks himself over and after listing his good points tears down the perfect picture by admitting some really scandalous shortcomings.

Picture Play has asked me to analyse myself for publication. No matter how you look at it, this is by way of being a tough assignment. I am at first assailed by considerable doubt as to whether readers are interested in my shortcomings, inhibitions, talents, and preferences. I'm further concerned over just how this data can be sensibly outlined without giving myself the worst of it, or of leaning to the other extreme and being accused of a bit of ego.

I have little respect or admiration for a fathead and perhaps less of either for any one guilty of false modesty. As a matter of fact, my good points are so sparse that I can't afford to be modest about them, and I have such a lot of grade-A faults that my ego never gets chance to do any real sprouting.

I'm quite proud of and happy over my sense of humour. This I really consider my saving grace, and I hope I'll not be misunderstood when I say that in my present occupation it has served me to excellent purpose.

I know I've a very good ear for music, a heritage come by honestly, both my parents having been quite musical. My mother sang in numerous amateur productions, including the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and my father was a right handy man with the guitar at church socials, clambakes, and taffy pulls.

I am an omnivorous reader and my taste in literature is somewhat better than middlin'. My memory is quite good. A face never deserts me, but names are forgotten a month after having first heard them.

I think I'm rather a snappy dresser, even though I receive no encouragement in this belief from my wife, family, friends, or business associates. As a matter of fact, they are, without exception, openly derisive. However, they fail to take into consideration a very serious handicap with which I struggle in my efforts to achieve sartorial perfection. I am colour-blind!

I play a pretty good game of golf for a guy who doesn't get out much, possessing a six handicap. I am also the most patient of fishermen. Last summer I trolled the Pacific for six straight days without so much as a bite. I have no statistics available at this writing, but I believe this is something of a record performance.

And now we come to the bad points, an exhaustive survey of which could go on indefinitely. Pull up a chair.

I am the laziest white man I know. My wife is in constant amazement at the variety of excuses I can conjure up to avoid anything remotely smacking of labour. I like to sing, so this hardly comes under the heading of work.

I love golf, so it can be similarly classified. Many a Sunday I have toured thirty-six holes which, roughly speaking, amounts to about twelve miles of hiking. Yet the very prospect of walking over to Dick Arlen's - a stone's throw from the golf course - appalls me and leaves me strangely apathetic to his invitations.

Although I went through high school and five years at college, I cannot multiply 181 by 604 and get anything approximating the correct result. And long division is simply not in my ken. In fact, anything pertaining to figures is beyond me. Perhaps I should have said mathematics.

I am stubborn and unreasonable. I cannot be nice or even civil to people I don't like, even though there may be no real reason for my antipathy. I'm not vindictive but I can neither forgive nor forget a wrong, whether fancied or real. For instance, the management of one of the local hotels where I once sang often promised me, whilst I was singing there, that they would organise an orchestra and put me at the head of it. Although I laboured long and diligently the fulfilment of this promise was never forthcoming. When they continued bringing in new orchestras with other leaders, I walked out in a fit of pique. They sued me and before I could resume activities, I was forced to pay them a sum in excess of all I had earned the entire time I worked there. Friends, that was a bitter pill to swallow.

Even more distasteful to me, is the knowledge that this ballroom is the only place in town to have a good time of an evening. It is Hollywood's hottest night spot and my little helpmate is constantly beseeching me to take her there. But when I think of that pay off something in my sensitive nature revolts. The very thought of contributing to their bulging coffers is most painful, so the Crosbys seek their diversion in less fertile fields. Silly, I guess, but that's how I am.

I am terribly thoughtless. Most of the few misunderstandings my wife and I have are over my thoughtlessness. The day she came home from the

hospital with the baby I went out to play golf. I rode home with her from the hospital, and had seen to it there were flowers in the house. She had the nurse and a lot of her friends there with her, so it never occurred to me she would mind if I left her for a few hours. She knew I'd be back later and I knew she'd be there when I returned. Naturally, after she explained how she felt I was pretty conscience stricken about it, and I think I may honestly say, and mean it, that if we ever have any more children I won't leave her the day she returns home from the hospital.

A publicity photo of Bing's lovely wife, Dixie.

I am a very bad host and can't comfortably indulge in the ordinary amenities of social life. A great clamour has been raised from time to time in my own little circle, over the fact that when I get sleepy I excuse myself and leave my guests. I've never been able to discover just why I should stay up when I'd like to be in bed. My wife loves late hours and she's always on hand to see that our guests have everything they want. I'm quite sure they have a better time when there are only kindred spirits present than they would have if I sat up with them, openly blinking and yawning and making them feel that their sprightly quips were being wasted.

I know only the most rudimentary rules of social etiquette and deportment. I was probably too lazy to learn, and the worst of it is I'm never embarrassed when flagrantly guilty of some violation of the social code. I received many a shellacking in the woodshed for this weakness during my youth, but it didn't help.

There's no use trying to disguise the fact that I am notoriously inept at handling a car. Whilst in Los Angeles with Paul Whiteman, I completely demolished two Fords and even now the fenders, bumpers and other impedimenta on my swankier car take awful beatings. I swear I try my utmost to drive carefully, but in spite of all my precautions, wily motorists seem to lurk at every intersection, ready to charge out and smack me amidships.

My wife and mother seem determined to take from me the vestige of glory accruing from making my own way at an early age. The latter seems desirous of giving the impression I was raised in the lap of luxury, and the former, for various reasons, is more than willing to believe it. In fact, Dixie, in an article she wrote recently, came out boldly and said that my early jobs were figments of my imagination. I regards such utterances on the part of my family as base calumny.

I was raised in a family in comfortable but moderate circumstances. Although the necessities of life were always provided, spending money was never forthcoming. Being a young fellow who liked to get around, see all the new shows and, on Saturday nights, whisk over the waxed floors of the local dance emporium with the chickadee of the moment, it became incumbent on me at an early age to rustle around each week and snag a few bucks. I sold newspapers and magazines, mowed lawns, cut wood, picked apples, sold magazine subscriptions, worked in a law office, janitored in a man's club and pursued a variety of occupations. In view of what I mentioned earlier in this article concerning my aversion to work, this seems incomprehensible. The only explanation I can offer for my industry is that I hated being broke worse that I hated labour.

I am forever bordering on the abyss of obesity. I have attempted many diets to overcome this dangerous inclinations, but nothing helps. I weigh one hundred sixty-eight pounds and can't whack off an ounce, although I exercise religiously and energetically. I am self-conscious to an extreme, although many people have told me I do not betray it. On the stage or over the air I seldom feel confident that I'm getting over, and, being naturally indolent, generally fail to take any steps about it.

In conclusion, I consider myself one of the luckiest of men. I have a lovely wife, a baby - lusty of lung and giving great promise of being quite a singer - a couple of good jobs lined up and a few bucks salted away against my declining years. Having done nothing to merit all these things, I can only attribute their possession to the prayers of my mother, with a little blind luck thrown in on the side.

Bing Crosby

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Up until a week before my reviews were due to be sent to Malcolm Macfarlane, I had only one CD to actually write about. You can imagine I was quite pleased when a few more came to light at the last minute. Taking the whole year into account it has been a very good year for Bing on CD with some really excellent material being released for the first time on compact disc. With so much to choose from I think that my favourites were "Bing Crosby's Hawaii" and "Bing Crosby - Christmas Album" (also released as "A Christmas Toast From Bing"). Let's hope that we get another good year in 1996.

Bing Crosby On Radio In The Thirties **S.I.A.E. RY 18** **Italy**
Original Broadcasts From 1937 to 1938

Hello Hawaii
Flat Foot Floogie w Bob Burns
Lovelight In The Starlight
Silver On The Sage
Someone Else May Be There While I'm Gone
Naturally
You Got To Start Off Each Day With A Song w Jimmy Durante
I Can Dream Can't I w The Andrews Sisters
On Top Of Old Smokey w Burl Ives
Hours Of Love w George Burns
Louise/Mimi w Maurice Chevalier
That Old Gang Of Mine
If I Knew You Were Coming w Bob Hope
For Me And My Gal w Judy Garland
A Bold Fisherman w H Bogart & Lauren Bacall
Up A Lazy River/Paper Doll w The Mills Bros.
Cuanto Le Gusta w Peggy Lee
May The Good Lord Bless And Keep You
w Nat King Cole & The Andrews Sisters
Can I Forget You
I Still Love To Kiss You Goodnight
When You Dream About Hawaii
If It's The Last Thing I Do
Once In A While
The Lonesome Road / Sweet Stranger (shown as separate tracks on sleeve)
Swingin' Down The Lane
She's Tall She's Tan She's Terrific
Once In A While (not shown on sleeve)

On the face of it, it would appear as if all the material was from KMH, although, one only has to view the titles to know this isn't the case - the sleeve shows all titles from either 1937 or 1938 but in reality we have titles from the 40s and 50s and even one from the 60s ('That Old Gang Of Mine' from the Symphonette sessions). Ignoring the sleeve anomalies, the overall content is excellent and the sound quality is perfectly acceptable. You should not be put off purchasing this most enjoyable and good value album. A few old perennials such as the duets with Jimmy Durante, Burl Ives, and Bob Hope etc. are included but in the main the other titles have had little or no exposure to compact disc. The following are new to CD:- Hello Hawaii, Flat Foot Floogie, Lovelight In The Starlight, Naturally, That Old Gang Of Mine, If It's The Last Thing I Do, Sweet Stranger, Swingin' Down The Lane and She's Tall She's Tan She's Terrific. I would purchase this CD if it only had Bing's marvellous version of 'Can I Forget You' - all the other tracks are a bonus of course.
Running Time: 77.58 *Price: £7.99*

King Bing **Hallmark 300222** **UK**
20 Golden Favourites From The King Of The Crooners

You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me
Dinah (B take)
Temptation
With Every Breath I Take
May I
Sweet Georgia Brown
June In January
Sunday Monday Or Always
I Love You (Porter)
New San Antonio Rose
Mr Gallagher And Mr Shean
I'm An Old Cowhand
Deep In The Heart Of Texas
Sierra Sue
You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
Swinging On A Star
Trade Winds
Moonlight Becomes You
Too Marvellous For Words
Pennies From Heaven

You can't help but agree with their choice of album titles, but this one I fear is probably only for the dedicated collector as all of the songs have appeared on compact disc many times over, although I haven't checked for alternate takes. The quality and value is however very good. I like the sleeve notes which read as follows "The best selling singer of all time and a collection of some of his finest

recorded moments. Crosby's ability encompassed crooning, swing and comedy, and those styles are all represented here, imbued with that good-natured vocal confidence that made him the world's favourite". I'll agree with that. Purchased at a local Asda Supermarket at a bargain price.
Running Time: 59.08 *Price: £2.99*

Bing Crosby (3 CD Set) **Chansons Cinema CIN 012** **France**

Vol. 1 CIN 009	**Vol. 2 CIN 010**	**Vol. 3 CIN 011**
Bing Crosby With Paul Whiteman & His Orchestra	**Bing Crosby In Hollywood 1930-1933**	**Bing Crosby In Hollywood 1933/4**
Constantinople	THE KING OF JAZZ 1930	GOING HOLLYWOOD 1933
Get Out And Get Under The Moon	Happy Feet	Just An Echo In The Valley
'Tain't So Honey 'Tain't So	A Bench In The Park w Brox Sisters	Beautiful Girl
I'd Rather Cry Over You	A Bench In The Park	After Sundown
I'm On A Crest Of A Wave	It Happened In Monterey - Non Bing	We'll Make Hay While The Sun...
That's My Weakness Now	I Like To Do Things For You	Temptation
Because My Baby Don't Mean	Ragamuffin Romeo - Non Bing	Our Big Love Scene
Maybe Now	So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds	WE'RE NOT DRESSING 1934
Out O' Town Gal	Got Together	Love Thy Neighbour
I'm Bringing A Red Red Rose - Non Bing	Song Of The Dawn	Once In A Blue Moon
Coquette	THE BIG BROADCAST 1932	Goodnight Lovely Little Lady
Reaching For Someone	Dinah w Mills Bros.	May I
S'posin'	Please	She Reminds Me Of You
At Twilight	Here Lies Love	SHE LOVES ME NOT 1934
When You're Counting The Stars Alone	COLLEGE HUMOR 1933	I'm Hummin' I'm Whistlin' I'm Singin
	Learn To Croon	
	Love In Bloom	
I'm A Dreamer Aren't We All	Moonstruck	Straight From The Shoulder
A Bundle Of Old Love Letters	Down The Old Ox Road	
	TOO MUCH HARMONY 1933	
	Thanks	
	The Day You Came Along	
	I Guess It Had To Be That Way	
	Black Moonlight	
Running Time: 49.16	Running Time: 55.57	Running Time: 43.33

This is a really well put together set with nicely designed sleeves and good sleeve notes. It looks as if it has been designed to sell either in a set form or singularly. In the main the sound quality is exceptionally good, although some of the tracks on Vol. 3 don't quite come up to the high standard of the other two volumes. I am pretty sure that I'm right in saying that the following titles make their debuts on compact disc: Constantinople, I'm On A Crest Of A Wave, Coquette, At Twilight, A Bundle Of Old Love Letters, A Bench In The Park (2 tracks), I Like To Do Things For You, Song Of The Dawn, The Day You Came Along and Straight From The Shoulder. Quite a few other titles have also had very little exposure on CD, although it's true to say that 15 titles have appeared on CD a minimum of 4 times and 2 titles are non Bing. Considering the sound quality and the rarity of some titles this is not too bad a value set at approx. £30 for the three CDs. I would like to thank Phil Clarke without who's help I would have been unable to review this set.

Bing Crosby -The Magic Collection **ARC Records MEC 949001** **Holland**

Where The Blue Of The Night	I'm Through With Love
I Found A Million Dollar Baby	Out Of Nowhere
Now That You Are Gone	Stardust
At Your Command	Goodnight Sweetheart
Dancing In The Dark	I Apologise
Too Late	Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams
Sweet And Lovely	Just A Gigolo
A Faded Summer Love	I Surrender Dear
Just One More Chance	If You Should Ever Need Me

When first looking at the contents of this CD I thought here we go again - repeat repeat repeat! On a second closer look I see that most of material has of course appeared on CD many times before but surprisingly enough songs like At Your Command (3 times), Now That You Are Gone (3), Too Late (2) and A Faded Summer Love (2) have only had limited exposure. I have not heard this album myself but I am assured by member Geoff Nicholson that the quality is good. He tells me that it was purchased at a hypermarket in Boulogne. You never know where Bing is going to turn up these days do you?

Running Time: 53.48 *Price: £1.50 Approx.*

The Essential Collection (2 CDs) **Wisepack LECDD 641** **Unknown**
Presenting Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole
The Bing content is identical to Disc 1 Wisepack LECDD 612 as listed in the last issue of BING
There are 21 tracks on the Nat King Cole disc.
As the Bing CD is the same album as the previous Wisepack release I can say that the quality is indeed very good. I have not heard the Nat King Cole album so can't comment on this.

Bing Crosby's Hawaii *A number of members have asked me where they can obtain this CD. All I can do is to give them the address on the sleeve and hope they are successful in their endeavours. The CD is Distributed by:- Good Music Record Co. Inc. 223 Katonah Avenue, Katonah, New York 10536*

CORRECTIONS
1. The album shown in the last issue as **Blue Moon** should have been:
Bing Crosby Duets With Friends **Blue Moon BMCD3014** **Spain**
The contents were correctly listed and although I have still not heard this myself, I have it on good authority that it has exceptional sound quality.
My apologies if anyone had problems getting this CD with the previous information.
2. The Million Sellers Vol. 2 **Charly Records CDCD 1229** **UK**
Swinging On A Star, Don't Fence Me In and Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (this track omitted in last issue)

GUEST APPEARANCES for those who like to collect everything (and can afford to). I must admit that it's almost impossible keeping track of all the guest appearances and I can't normally give any idea of the sound quality

Rosemary Clooney (3 CD Set) — **Reader's Digest 122-1 122-2 122-3** **US**
60 tracks (2 Bing) — 'I Get Ideas' and 'The Poor People Of Paris'
Pure Nostalgia — **ASV Living Era CD AJA 5118** **UK**
Temptation

The Dance Band Days (6 CD Set) — **Reader's Digest RCDC 311/6** **UK**
Only two Bing titles appear - — Too Marvellous For Words
You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby

Songs That Won The War — **Laser Light (numbers below)** **USA**
1. Rosie The Riviter 12449 — 12 tracks (1 Bing) Swinging On A Star
2. The Home Front 12494 — 12 tracks (1 Bing) Buy Buy Buy Bonds
3. Something To Remember You By12500 — 12 tracks (1 Bing) I'll Be Home For Christmas

Smithsonian American Songbook Series — **Smithsonian Society** **USA**

1. E Y Harburg — **AD048-16 A24152**
23 tracks (1 Bing) — Brother Can You Spare A Dime
2. Frank Loesser — **AD048-15 A24153**
22 tracks (1 Bing) — Tallahassee w Andrews Sisters
3. Dorothy Fields — **AD048-13 A24150**
22 tracks (1 Bing) — Close As Pages In A Book
4. Kurt Weill — **AD048-17 A24154**
20 tracks (1 Bing) — September Song

Everlasting Songs Of Love — **The Entertainers CD 272 UK**
23 tracks (1 Bing) — True Love w Grace Kelly

The Rodgers And Hammerstein Collection — **MCA MCLD 19237** **UK**
Oh What A Beautiful Morning w Trudy Erwin — The Loneliness Of Evening
No Other Love — There's Music In You

This CD was released in 1993 but I have only recently purchased it. There are 18 tracks with other artists including Dick Haymes, Judy Garland, Al Jolson, Buddy Greco, Jack Jones and Rosemary Clooney. It is well worth having for the four Bing titles which have had little or no exposure to CD. The sound quality is excellent.

The Stars Salute Johnny Mercer — **Charly Records** **CDCD 1238**
20 tracks (1 Bing) — I'm An Old Cowhand
You're The Tops - Cole Porter — **Avid** **AVC 518** **UK**
21 tracks (1 Bing) — Let's Do It

I now include details of two albums that member Roy Chappell has been involved with particularly as the first one is a tribute to Bing

Memories of Bing Crosby
Roy Chappell & Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra - BluesHouse BH 009 Switzerland

Deep Down South
Please Don't Talk About Me
Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gave To Me /
/What's The Reason I'm Not Pleasing You / Angry
Dear Hearts And Gentle People
De Silva, Brown and Henderson Medley:
Best Things In Life Are Free
100 Years From Today
Baby Medley: When My Baby Smiles At Me/
Baby Face Everybody Loves My Baby
/ Yes Sir That's My Baby
Crosby Medley : Can't We Talk It Over / I'm Confessin'
Please / Just One More Chance
Jazz Me Blues
Blue Of The Night / True Love / White Christmas
Dixie Medley: Is It True What The Say About Dixie/
Way Down Yonder In New Orleans / Alexander's Ragtime
Band / Darktown Strutters Ball

This CD was put together to be sold alongside the recent European tour undertaken by Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra with Roy being the accompanying vocalist. The Orchestra specialises in recreating the jazz and hot dance music of the '20s and '30s and this CD makes very pleasant listening and is a nice

tribute to Bing. For those members who may not have heard of Roy, he's a very amiable person who sings with a relaxed pleasant style with a touch of the Bing's / Perry Como's.. He is a great Bing and Perry Como fan who enjoys his singing and has in his time sung with the Sid Phillips Band. Roy was chosen to sing at the unveiling of Bing's statue at Gonzaga University. There are a limited number of these CDs available from: Terry Dash Management 16 Chiswick End, Meldreth, Royston, Herts SG8 6LZ
Price £14.00 including p&p

The second CD on which Roy sings is:-
T'ain't Nobody's Bizness If We Do **Bowstone Records OWSCD 2603** **UK**
Mark Rodger Manchester Jazz Roy sings the following numbers:-
I Don't Care If The Sun Don't Shine, Aren't You Glad You're You, Personality and We'll Be Back
Roy sings all his numbers in his own relaxed style which makes enjoyable listening . I particularly liked his version of Aren't You Glad You're You. I also found the Mark Rodger Manchester Jazz music easy on the ear. There are 17 tracks on the CD. Price CD £12.60 inc. p&p Cassette £6.50 inc. p&p Obtainable from: Bowstone Records Belper Road Heaton Mersey Ind Estate Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3QR

Whilst we're away from the Bing scene I'd like to mention another CD which may be of interest to members as I know some people like to have instrumental versions of Bing's songs.
The Special Magic Of Louis Armstrong **Start Records STOCD 104 or MC STOC 104 UK**
A Musical Tribute To 'Satchmo' **Terry Lightfoot & His Band**
The instrumental versions of Bing numbers are: Now You Has Jazz, Dardanella, Lazy River, Jeepers Creepers, Muskrat Ramble, Mack The Knife, Hello Dolly, Cabaret and Sleepy Time Down South. There are 20 titles on the CD which makes very pleasant listening.
Running Time: 72.32 *Price: CD £5.00. Cassette £3.00 Approx.*

FROM MY CRYSTAL BALL:
I have heard a whisper that Capitol Records plan a Bing CD in their Spotlight On series 'Ladies And Gentlemen Of Song'. Let's hope that this comes to fruition as this is a wonderful series of albums. I have again spoken with John McNicholas and he tells me that he is still hopeful that the Chronological Bing CD will appear before too long. He has again asked me to tender his apologies to members waiting for this CD.

My special thanks go to Phil Clarke, Ernest Sutkowski, Leslie Gaylor and Charles Baillie for their continued help throughout the year Once again I would ask anyone who sees any releases not included in my reviews to be kind enough to send me full details.

By the time you read these pages we will be rapidly approaching the festive season so, I would like to take this opportunity in wishing all our members a happy and healthy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Jim Reilly

There's a Voice

Ron and Peggy Pearson's son, Stan, wrote them a special poem some time ago and we have great pleasure in reproducing it here.

There's a blind war veteran standing alone,
face bleached and worn by the sun,
eyes burned out under the guns.
He stands silent for those who did not come home,
reads the names written in stone,
in some mid-western small town.
And a voice drifts across the dust,
soft on an almost still mid-day.
And the sad soldier listens,
the voice says all there is to say.

There's a cold eyed, desperate dust bowl farmer,
battered by the killer winds,
crucified for others sins.
He looks, searching the skyline for an answer,
but there is none close at hand,
and no plough will scratch this land.
And a voice cuts across the room,
stills his hand reaching for the gun.
And the wasted share cropper hears,
the voice of his father and son.

There's a ragged kid on a bomb site,
scruffy clothes and tousled hair,
knows too well what has happened here.
He plays with a stick and the wheel of a bike,
tries in vain to understand,
those who made London, wasteland.
And a voice drowns those bombers out,
shines like a searchlight in the night.
And the orphan rides on his dreams,
the voice says, "It'll be alright".

There's a young couple in a dockside cafe,
he looks like Jimmy Cagney,
and he sings like Bing Crosby.
And she wonders about tomorrow, today,
across the smoke questions burn,
he promises to return.
And a voice calls across the quay,
follows the sailor to his war.
And the girl knows the day will dawn,
the voice is a promise of more.

There's a voice that takes me down all these streets,
it sings of dreams and heartbreak,
and the promises we make.
In that voice yesterday and tomorrow meet,
in a union that is holy,
it's the voice, it's you, it's me.
And the voice croons across our time,
it's all the things we wished to be.
And the dreams held for our children.
The voice of it all is Crosby.

Dedicated to the sailor and his girl.

Stan Pearson - August 1991

Jimmy Tarbuck

We were amused to hear Jimmy Tarbuck mention Bing in his TV programme on July 30th. last. Jimmy described how Bing telephoned him to invite him to play golf with him and Jimmy did not believe that it was Bing. He says, perhaps with some poetic licence, that he persuaded Bing to sing a snatch of 'White Christmas' over the phone to prove his identity. Jimmy laced his story with liberal impressions of Bing's speaking voice and finished up by describing what happened at the end of their round together. Bing said, "Well played, but I could take 6 shots off your round if you'd listen to me." Jimmy was anxious to know the secret which would bring about this dramatic improvement in his game and Bing went on, "Leave out one of the short holes!"

The Road to the Champs Elysees

Brian Ford sent us a page from 'Cycling Weekly' as it contained the following :-

"Bing Crosby fan Jacques Rue-Prive fulfilled a life-long ambition by riding the 1988 Tour. He subsequently wrote a book about the experience, 'The Road to the Champs Elysees' which was a best-seller in France."

Sounds like a good Bing man in view of the title of his book and we'll have to ask Etty to rope Monsieur Rue-Prive into the ICC.

Conchita Montenegro

Thank you to both Keith Parkinson and to Geoff Milne for providing further details on this lady who I mentioned in the article 'My City By The Bay' in BING 110. Amalgamating their information we learn that Conchita was born in San Sebastian, Spain on September 11, 1912. Educated in Madrid, she convinced her family of her dancing talents by her performance in a charity play. Suitably encouraged, she danced her way to Paris, Nice,

London and Berlin and eventually to Hollywood at the instigation of an MGM executive.

Her film debut was in a silent film in 1927 - 'Sortilegio' - and then she came to the attention of a major French film company for which she starred in 'Le Femme et La Pantin'. Her Hollywood appearances as an exotic lead included 'Strangers May Kiss', 'Never the Twain Shall Meet' and 'The Cisco Kid' (all 1931), 'The Gay Caballero' (1932), 'Laughing At Life' (1933) and 'Handy Andy' (1934). When she appeared with Bing at the Fox Theatre in 1932 she was probably more famous than him on an international scale at that time. She went on to work in Italy before she ended her film career at the age of 32 with 'Lola Montes' (1944), made in France. For all we know, she is still enjoying retirement.

I never cease to be amazed at the knowledge of our members!

The British EPography

Colin Pugh has written with some amendments to the listing given in BING 110. The following should be added:-

Columbia SEG 7553 'Frankie Trumbauer & His Orchestra' which contains 'Mississippi Mud' (Bing) with the remaining tracks non-Bing.
MGM ES 3515 (the stereo issue of EP 762)
Reprise R 30039 'Robin And The Seven Hoods'
Warner Bros.
WSEP 2050 (Stereo issue of WEP 6050)
WSE 6100 (Stereo issue of WEP 6100)
WSE 6103 (Stereo issue of WEP 6103)

Many thanks, Colin. Any further amendments would be welcomed.

Bing and ???

Our cover photograph shows Bing on the set of 'White Christmas' and another photograph taken at the same time, which we reproduce here, shows him with a mystery lady. She looks very familiar to me but I can't put a name to her face. Who was she? Please write in and solve the mystery for me.

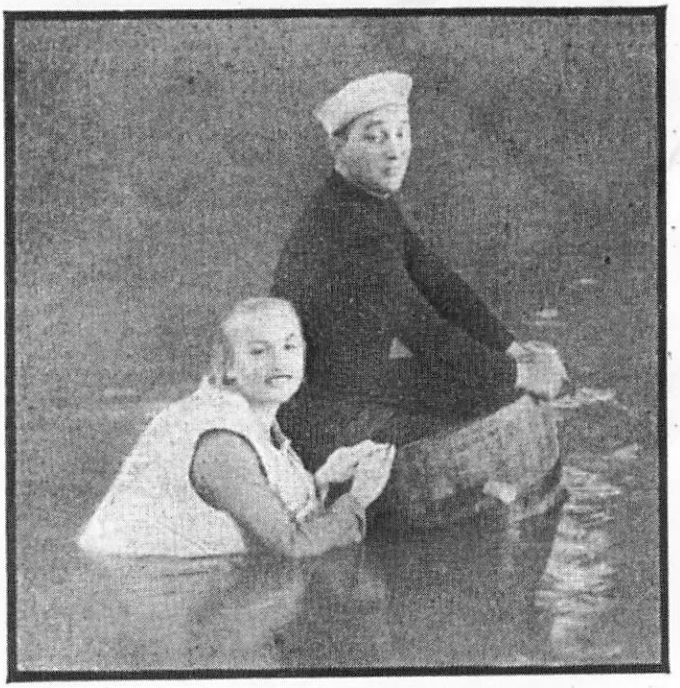
A Christmas Competition

The competition shown below appeared in Film Weekly in 1935 and the copy was sent in by Jim Newell. We don't know what won the competition in 1935 so we challenge members to send in their suggestions of a title for the picture. The title should be the name of a film. The prize for the best entry received by the Editor before the end of January will be a refund of the 1996 subscription to the ICC

FILM WEEKLY, February 8, 1935.

"Film Weekly" Competitions

Prizes for Titling this Picture



What on earth are Carole Lombard and Bing Crosby doing? See if you can make suggestions by finding an apt film title to fit the picture

FILMGOERS from every part of the country have been sending in entries in hundreds for these titling competitions. Have you tried your hand at them yet? If not, here is another chance.

On this page you see a picture of Carole Lombard and Bing Crosby in an awkward situation. Exactly how they got like it we don't know, but perhaps you have some suggestions. All you have to do to stand a chance of winning one of the money prizes offered is to give the picture a title, *but it must be the title of a film.* There are no restrictions as to the date when the film was made—you may use the title of any film old or new.

For instance, you might title it *Over The River,* or *Here Comes the Navy.* This picture is perhaps a little more difficult than previous ones, but a few minutes' thought should give you plenty of ideas.

Be Amusing!

Your aim should be to find an amusing and apt title that fits the picture. The first one that comes into your head may be good, but it may be too hackneyed. A second thought will probably produce a wittier and more subtle title.

For what is, in the opinion of the Editor, the most appropriate and original application of a film title to the picture, a First Prize of One Guinea will be awarded. In addition, there will be two Consolation Prizes of 10s. 6d. each for what are considered to be the two next best titles. In the event of more than one reader sending the same winning entry, the prizes will be awarded to those entries strictly in the order in which they are scrutinised.

One Card—Two Titles

Entries should be made on postcards. Entrants may make as many attempts as they wish, *but not more than two titles must appear on one postcard.*

Postcards should be addressed to "Titles (4)," FILM WEEKLY, 10-13, Bedford Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2, and must reach this office before midday on Thursday, February 14.

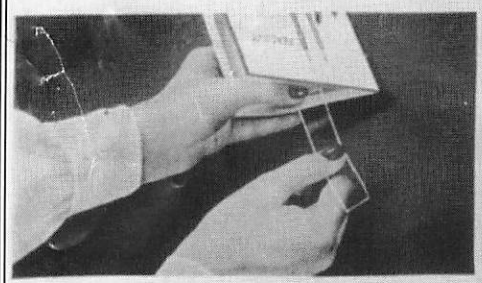
"TAPE CHRISTMAS CARDS on your tree with loops of cellophane tape," says Bing. "Pick out cards from your best pals—guys and gals likely to drop in to your diggin's during the holidays. You'll get a big kick out of the grins when they see their cards on your 'Friendship Tree'!"

BING CROSBY TRIMS A "FRIENDSHIP TREE"

Star of "MR. MUSIC," a Paramount picture, joins in a growing Christmas custom

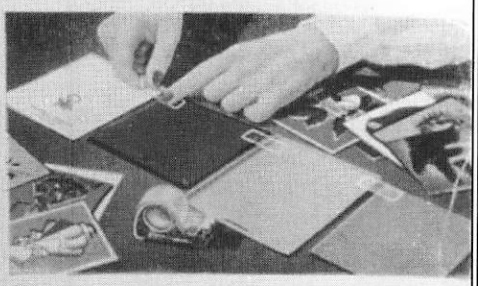
"A 'FRIENDSHIP TREE' is a wonderful idea," says Nancy Olson, Bing's Paramount co-star. "It gives Christmas greetings extra meaning. All my friends are having a 'Friendship Tree' this year."

"BRIGHTEN UP YOUR HOME with cards taped around the fireplace and doorways and mirrors," says Nancy. Taped singly or in chains, these colorful Christmas greetings give the whole house a festive look.



EASY TO DO—Take a five-inch strip of "Scotch" Cellophane Tape and press one end of the tape *firmly* on the card. Then . . .

PASS TAPE OVER TWIG and stick the other end tightly to the back of the card. Cellophane tape sticks without moistening.



MAKE CHAINS OF CARDS this way. Tape end of chain to molding or woodwork, never to wallpaper or painted walls.

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Co. Durham Tel: 0191 3883255